The 1950's Strangest Genre... Atom Age Comics!

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

No. 46
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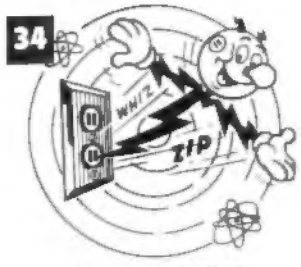

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A Gemstone Publication

ON THE COVER:
More than four decades before the film "Independence Day", the Capital Dome was obliterated on **World War III** #1 (Mar 1953). It and **Atomic War** #1 (Nov 1952) are considered the two most collectible covers of this historic genre.

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Issue Number #46, April 1997

Sleepless in San Diego...

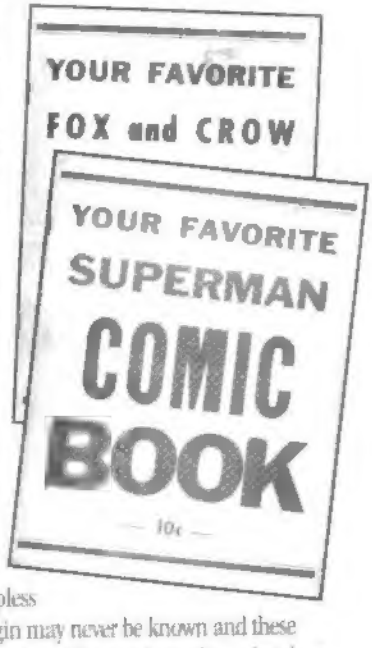
Just when I think I've seen everything... along comes something completely new! And when that new item is weird enough, I stay up at night... night after night... trying to figure out where the heck it fits into the puzzle of comic book history.

When the story of these things first crossed my desk, it was like a six-pager right out of a pre-hero *Tales To Astonish*... except I was the doomed Ditko-drawn character. I can hear Stan Lee's introductory narration now... "Look, dear reader, at comic collector, Gary M. Carter, traveling on a journey into the sleepless unknown. Will he find the answer for which he searches... or will he be trapped in an eternity of sleepless nights, an accursed insomniac... forever searching... searching... for the answer to... The Strange Case of the VX6 Copies!"

These heretofore unknown "VX6" specimens were purchased from the Rebels Comic Crypt in El Paso, Texas, by collector, Dan Hampton. *Your Favorite Superman Comic Book*, is really a "re-covered" copy of *Action Comics* #250 (March '959), *Your Favorite Fox And Crow Comic Book*, is really a "re-covered" copy of *Fox & Crow* #56 (June/July 1959).

Both have totally blank inside front and back covers. All cover printing is in one-color red, including the "ad" on the back cover. The "new" cover is attached to the main comic with an additional set of larger industrial machine staples so that four staples are visible at the centerfold.

As to the origin of these strangely formatted comics, Dan Hampton theorizes that they might be remaindered copies (newsstand returns) that were illegally used to commercially promote the automobile battery refurbishing liquid (VX6) advertised on the back of the "new" cover. Then these "red and white" editions were either given away or wholesaled to auto parts stores, gas stations, or auto repair locations.



My theory is that, perhaps, unbeknownst to DC, the National Dynamics Company (makers and/or distributors of VX6) illegally recovered comic books (either legally purchased or illegal newsstand returns) and created a company and/or product premium or giveaway with the addition of their own customized (and incredibly cheap) cover... later to be distributed by the manufacturers product distribution sales force. (Whewwwww... say that ten times real fast!)

Like that Ditko character, I still maintain a vain hope that the mystery will be solved. Yet with each passing sleepless night, I become more resigned to the fact that their true origin may never be known and these two books will likely remain one of the many unsolved mysteries of the comic book marketplace.

So if any of you have any knowledge that might help solve the strange case of the VX6 Copies... take pity, fellow collectors, take pity! Write or call ASAP, because I can't go on staying up every night... "searching... searching... forever searching for the answer...."

Gary

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EDITORS EMERITUS
Stan Lee • Julie Schwartz

Dan Adkins sets the record straight

RE: Link Yaco's article on Wood: Gary, I was never fired at Marvel. I was made Art Director of their black and white line for two years. No editor at Marvel ever said a word to me about swiping from other artists. The fuss was all in the fan press. There was only one editor there in 1968, Stan Lee. No one asked me to ink like Joe Sinnott.

Witzend was started by me before I even met Wally Wood. I had gotten a story from Jack Gaughan and one from Archie Goodwin, and drawn nine pages myself. I went to Wally Wood to buy a sketch from him for the fanzine. He liked my art and I ended up working for him. I grew interested in doing comics and he took over editing Witzend when I grew bored with it. I had already published five issues of SATA; a fanzine, and done thousands of drawings for others.

In 1968, I was working for Marvel, Creepy, Eerie, Monsters of Filmland, Galaxy, Worlds of If, Amazing, and Fantastic. I was doing comics, illustrations and painting covers.

I decided to ink because I loved the pencils of John Buscema, Jack Kirby, Barry Smith, Paul Gulacy, Jim Steranko, Neal Adams, Alex Toth and many others.

I didn't enjoy every inking job, but Link Yaco paints a false picture. Unlike almost every artist at Marvel, I insisted on inking my own work. That's how much I loved inking.

In a full year working for Wally, (I did 16 months) I made $7,400. In the first year on my own I made $12,000. That's how I did when I got out from under Wood's wing. Of course, I went on to do over 800 comics. Mostly Marvel. Mostly inking.

I thought my penciling below average. I thought my inking was above average.

Dan Adkins, Pennsylvania

Roy Thomas Writes!

Having gone to work for Stan Lee at Marvel exactly three years after Spider-Man's debut in Amazing Fantasy #15, I was intrigued by Will Murray's thoughtful article on the projected 16th issue.

Will may just have hit upon the answer to the long-standing mystery of why a character Stan cared so much about from the very start wound up in the final issue of a dying magazine, instead of in an ongoing mag like Tales Of Suspense.

And care about Spidey he definitely did! One of the first things I remember longtime production manager Sol Brodsky telling me in 1965, during one of our several years' worth of lunches, is how Stan had felt from the very start that Spider-Man was something special--that Stan had tremendous faith in the character. Though Sol wasn't officially on staff in mid-'62, he was already doing freelance production work even then, and he knew whereof he spoke. However, neither he nor Stan (who early on told me essentially the same thing Sol did) ever elaborated on what eventually became the official story. I have no doubt whatever that Stan is telling the truth so far as he remembers it. He has no motive not to.

Murray's theory would answer a question that has long puzzled me: In spring of '62 I learned, through the comics fanzines (probably The Comicollector) that Stan had given out the information that he was going to come out with three new heroes that summer--Thor, Human Torch, and Ant-Man. Thus, I was startled when, during a lunch break from summer grad work, I walked into the same store where the previous summer I'd purchased two copies of Fantastic Four #1--and saw Amazing Fantasy #15 on the stands, with Spider-Man on the cover.

My first thought, I still recall, was that the information given out to the fanzines must have been wrong, and that "Ant-Man" had merely been a typo for "Spider-Man." Later, I wondered if Stan Lee had simply changed his mind and turned an insect-powered human into an arachnid-powered human. For, as Will Murray points out, Spider-Man appeared on the newsstands in the same month as Thor, and preceded both the Human Torch and Ant-Man series.

But--"The Man in the Bee-Hive" as precursor of yet another invertebrate-related series? Well… could be. I remember hearing, even in '65, how sales of the Tales To Astonish issue with "The Man in the Ant-Hill" had been so great it inspired Ant-Man, so maybe Stan was hoping

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that lightning would strike twice–or three times, counting Spidey.

I find it hard to relate to articles in CBM whose main purpose seems to be economic, but pieces like Will Murray's–even if they deal with arcana–are the fascinating type of material that comic-book fanzines were created in the early 1960s to explore!

Roy Thomas, South Carolina

Makes My Head Hurt

A friend of mine owns a copy of All Winners #11 in which one of the cfs/wraps is "short" a page. (The book contains a total of 56 pages, not counting covers.) That is, in the bound book, on one side of the staple there's a standard page (front and back), but on the other side of the staple there's a 1/4" flap, which is very tough to see unless you are looking for it, or examining the book closely by opening it up to the staple. Now you could conclude that the flap is all that remains of an ad page, say, which was removed, but I suspect that the publisher was in fact cutting corners with this technique, for the following reasons:

1. No story pages are missing.

2. All Winners #11, a quarterly, is cover dated 1944/45, when paper was in increasingly short supply.

3. Assuming the page was removed: then the "cut" is so straight as to suggest the work of a machine, or the finished edge of a single, untampered-with sheet of paper.

4. I have a handful of issues of Superman from the early 1950s–different era, different collection–with the exact same mysterious flap. I've also heard of some Detective Comics that have a similar "defect".

5. Something is weird about the math; 56 pages yields 14 cfs/wraps, whereas with the "missing" page added, you get 14.5 cfs/wraps. Also, 58 pages is not a multiple of 4, 8, 16, or 32–which I thought was standard for comic book page counts because of the way the books are printed. It makes my head hurt.

So it all boils down to this: have you ever heard of a publisher cutting corners in the '40s and '50s by printing standard, stapled comic books (not books with glued bindings like World's Finest or Comic Cavalcade with an odd-ball page count (i.e., a page count that is not a multiple of 4, 8, 16, or 32 pages), and/or with this weird "flap" technique? Or do you know of someone who has another copy of All Winners #11–or a comparable Timely quarterly from the same period–with which to support (or invalidate) my conjecture?

Naturally, if what I'm suggesting was an uncommon but nevertheless legitimate publishing practice during the Golden Age, it seems to me that your readers, and the Guide, ought to know about it. I'd hate for my friend to sell his All Winners for a lot less than it's worth because it's missing a page, when in fact the page was never there to begin with! Thanks,

Mike Smith, Johns Hopkins University

Now my head hurts too! Sheeesh, I thought I pretty savvy on page counts, but I was unaware of the All Winners #11 anomaly that you describe. Perhaps an enlightened CBM reader who is knowledgeable in the area of Timely/Marvel page counts will enlighten us both. Could you pass the aspirin, Mike?

Space Cadet

CB Marketplace # 43 is another great issue. I have been a fan since #22 and read it cover to cover each month and wish for more!!! I too grew up in the 1960s and have many fond memories of those more innocent days of comic collecting.

The issue that brings me to the ole' keyboard is your interview with Paul Newman. Most informative, as usual, but what knocked my socks off was the headline.....scripter for "Tom Corbett Space Cadet" syndicated newspaper comic strip. The artwork was done by Ray Bailey, an artist who has not received the praise that is due him. I have been researching the Tom Corbett character for almost 20 years (off & on...mostly off due to family responsibilities) and have been trying to tie together all of the similar plotlines seen in so many of the scripts, comics, newspaper strip etc. I had a feeling that it was all tied together so I put out a one shot fanzine in 1977 (SPACE OPERA) in hopes of finding other fans who could help tie some of these loose ends into a history of sorts. I did receive a lot of good contacts, but had to drop the project with many unanswered questions.

Which brings us to late 1996 when I started putting my Tom Corbett material from the fanzine onto a web site. On Jan. 1, 1997 I launched the site (http://fairfax2.laser.net/~epippi) and have *Continued on page 70*

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The Atomic Boo-ooom!

By Pat S. Calhoun

Featuring one of the all-time classic "Atomic War" stories, Captain Marvel Adventures #66 (Oct 1946) explores the horror of atomic holocaust... when CM's invulnerability leaves him the sole survivor of a nuclear war.

It was certainly a "brave new world" that dawned after the end of World War II. The dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had shown just how terrifying the marriage of science and weaponry could be. Perhaps the great triumph of the latter half of the 20th century is the simple fact that we haven't blown ourselves off the globe. One of the best comic book attempts to address the deadly issue of atomic destruction was also one of the first... *Captain Marvel Adventures* #66 (October 1946), the "Atomic War" cover and story.

This is one of the most moving and innovative superhero stories as well as a memorable statement about the horror of nuclear war. Captain Marvel is a helpless bystander during a worldwide atomic bomb attack, and his invulnerability keeps him alive while everyone around him is either blown away or dying of radiation. His

anguish is immense and all the more remarkable coming from a hero whose exploits tended to favor the humorous and light-hearted approach.

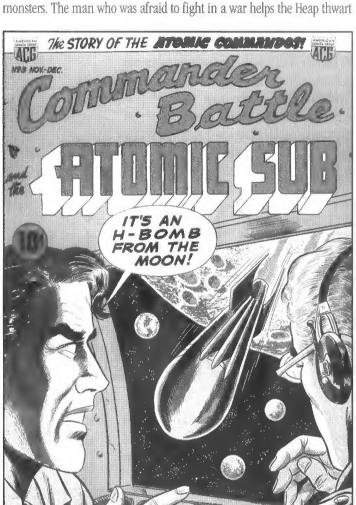
The story starts with Billy Batson at his news desk for radio station WHIZ when a flash comes in that Chicago has just been leveled by atomic bombs. An unknown enemy has launched A-bomb attacks against the USA and other countries throughout the world. The various victims eventually retaliate upon their traditional enemies- until Captain Marvel, flying in the upper atmosphere, sees and says: "Holy Moley! The atomic bombs are getting thicker and thicker! Every country is sending them... everywhere! Stop, you fools..." And the caption reads: "...As greed, confusion, and madness sweep through the world, all nations release their atomic bombs at each other." Of course the story ends with a framing sequence that makes it a "what iffer", with the closing admonition, "The world just can't afford to have another war, because it would wipe out all civilization and all human life." The story runs eleven pages and most of the rest of the (52-page) book is filler, but the cover and lead story are enough to make it a classic ish.

Despite the grim promise the atomic bombs offered, the hope that nuclear power could be harnessed as a cost-effective energy source also began to reach a wider audience. The idea of a ship driven across the ocean by atomic engines formed the basis for the lead story in *Airboy* vol. 8 #3 from April 1951. As always, the Airboy yarn is an illumination of character against an intriguing background. As has been written about Eisner's Spirit, Airboy often took a secondary role in his stories. Here the focus is on the "Living Fuse", a man, already contaminated by radioactivity, who works the inside controls for the atomic engines. The Fuse (whose vocal chords have been burned out by radiation) is really Dr. Cyclon... the designer of the S.S. Atomic's propulsion system, and the Doctor's assistant has taken over his identity.

Airboy's part in the Atomic's maiden voyage is to fly reconnaissance in Birdie to make sure that no vessels ahead get into the path of the speeding Atomic. In mid-ocean a hijack attempt threatens to overwhelm the Atomic unless the aloof Fuse intervenes by turning the engines back on at the proper moment. The poor mute Fuse--who's had his life and humanity stripped away--struggles to rise to the occasion as Airboy pleads to awaken the man's suppressed feelings for his fellow beings. The story makes its point through sheer drama; it's a satisfying 13-pager.

Also in this issue is a typically provocative entry in the Heap series; the Heap, part downed WWI German flier, part swamp growth, part force of nature--is one of the greatest Golden Age

characters. This nine-pager tells of a young army deserter–"in a small European country just after WWI"–who hides out in a spooky castle inhabited by a dwarfish and deformed Count. The Count has found a cache of dinosaur eggs at the bottom of a mine shaft on his property and has bred a number of hatchlings that need only contact with sunlight to turns to giant monsters. The man who was afraid to fight in a war helps the Heap thwart



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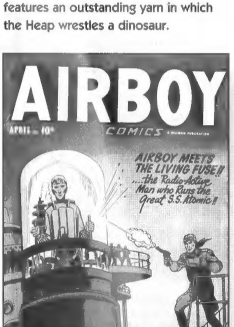
Commander Battle and the Atomic Sub #3 (Nov/Dec 1954, ACG) gave cold war propaganda some spiffy packaging. The concept of a small team of "specialist" heroes was certainly worthwhile.

the Count's plan to release the terrible lizards to wreak havoc across the countryside. Both Airboy and the Heap were drawn in the early 1950s by Ernie Schroeder who produced a lot of atmosphere with his scratchy and effective style and guided both characters to a dignified demise in 1953.

Going from the sublime to the ridiculous, it must be admitted that there is a fair share of early 1950s material that falls into the "H is for Hysteria" category. These "cold war comics" had various heroes and heroines foiling Commie plots that often involved nuclear annihilation of the capitalistic countries. Although much of this work is jingoistic jetsam, some was enlivened by wit or craft. *Commander Battle and the Atomic Sub*, from the American Comics Group, was more concerned with concepts of atomic power than pushy politics, but the seven-issue series is only a footnote compared to the outstanding achievement of ACG's two supernatural flagships, *Adventures Into The Unknown* and *Forbidden Worlds*. The propaganda (including a couple of Ike sightings) is handled with the same preposterousness as the other plot elements, which in the two-part story that dominates #3 (November/December 1954) includes the heavy challenge to one's "willing suspension of disbelief" of having the H-bomb attack from the moon prove to be launched by hostile Moon-men rather than the Reds. Be that as it may, Commander Bill Battle tells President Eisenhower that it should be easy enough to rig the atomic sub for space flight (!), and soon the Atomic Commandos are headed for the moon. They take along–for the first time–a Junior Commando, who has wowed them with his invention of a telepathy helmet.

The concept of a team operating an atomic sub and cruising around taking on high-tech threats is sound enough pulp melodrama, inspired by the launching of the first nuclear-powered submarine, the USA's Nautilus in 1954. Battle's cohorts are a crack scientist, a champion boxer, and an escape artist–kind of like Doc Savage's associates from the 1930s and even more like the–forthcoming in just over two years–*Challengers of the Unknown*. Art chores on the early issues fell mostly upon the redoubtable Shelly Moldoff, who struck a nice balance between realism and whimsy. Anyway, "Stowaway Jonny" and his mind-reading gadget come in mighty handy in the intrepid team's escape from the Lunarians, who–it turns out were prejudiced against Earth by an earlier visit from the Communist bloc. It's a roundabout way of making a political point, and it's really no more absurd than a lot of comic book material (from any age)–grade-B page-turning fodder. It is, after all, the rich compost of mediocre product that provides the medium where excellence can flourish. ■

The story of Airboy and "The Living Fuse" in Airboy Vol-8 #3 (Apr 1951, Hillman) is a good extrapolation of both the technological and the human dangers of atomic energy. This issue also features an outstanding yarn in which the Heap wrestles a dinosaur.

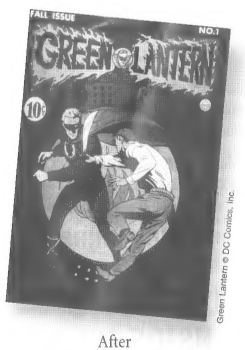


© HILLMAN

Pat Calhoun and his family live in Santa Rosa, California. He has been collecting, researching and appreciating comic books since the early 1960s, and is a nationally recognized comic book historian.

Who says Time Heals All Wounds.

Before



After

- Staples removed from book
- Interior folios separated
- Tape removed from first folio and centerfold
- Removal of previous restoration from cover, 2nd and 3rd folio
- Varnish removed from cover
- Infills at spine and on interiors
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- Cover resized
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Comics : A fine selection of Golden Age material. Origina. owner Wonder Woman #1. Extensive Silver Age Marvel runs, VF copy of Amazing Spider-Man #1. Disney and other Del high grade copies. Platinum era is represented by a high grade run of Cupples and Leon cardboard strip art books and hardcovers in DJ's seldom seen in this condition. Mask comics #1 & #2 and many other esoteric scarce books.

Pulps: The finest group of pulp magazines ever offered at public auction. Including Shadow #1, a complete set of Doc Savage pulps, long run of Weird Tales 1928-50's many high grade! Early Astounding near complete Clayton run. Amazing Stories Annual, Amazing Buck Rogers, high grade Octopus, large group of Burroughs pulps, Menace, Spicey's, file copy Westerns, dime novels. An incredible selection!

Animation: At the risk of being repetitive, our best selection ever! 200+ lots topped by a fabulous Seven Dwarf set up on Couvoisier wood veneer background, Bambi on Couvoisier, wonderful selection of Disney pieces from many of the major films, terrific selection of pencils, early Warner including 3 Bears on key master background, Super Rabbit cel, late 40's Warner piece with production background. Many other production pieces from other studios, limited and signed cels. All studios are represented.

Books and Paperbacks: Rare Shadow paperback, extremely desirable Dracula first edition with first of the White Worm and a 1928 stage flyer featuring Bela Lugosi, small but nice selection of first edition Oz books, Oz waddle book with "rare" DJ and several waddles. Seduction of the Innocent, Parade of Pleasure in DJ, Burroughs in DJ's, Pin-up collection including Marilyn and Betty Page. Selection of Disney books and Big Little Books.

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DC didn't monkey around with atomic themes!

No A-Bombs in the 1950s, but lots of outrageous ideas... and intelligent gorillas!

By Michelle Nolan

It was a simple, if time-consuming assignment: Just how often did DC's fantasy comics make use of atomic themes in its stories during the 1950s? The answer will blow you away: Almost never!

While other companies were making much more frequent use of stories about atomic power for better or (usually) for worse, National Comics (as DC was known in the 1950s) makes very few references to nuclear power in its science fiction/fantasy comics during the early years of the Cold War.

I did not have time to survey the entire company's output for this column, but I did check out DC's entire line of science fiction/fantasy/horror anthology titles from the 1950's–*Strange Adventures* #1-111, *Mystery in Space* #1-56, *House of Mystery* #1-93, *My Greatest Adventure* #1-38, *Tales of the Unexpected* #1-44, *House of Secrets* #1-27, and *Sensation/Sensation Mystery* #107-116.

This was, of course, before the classic "Atomic Knights" series first appeared in *Strange Adventures* #117 (June 1960). In retrospect, that series by Gardner Fox and Murphy Anderson was truly one of the most original concepts in the history of comics.

Occasionally I become a bit bleary-eyed and I may have missed one or two 1950's epics with atomic themes. But check out this startling fact: In all of those comics covering 379 issues and more than 1,400 stories, I found exactly two with the word "Atomic" in the title–and neither of them dealt with atomic war!

In fact, you can literally read a year or two worth of some of these comics and come across no references about either the atomic bomb or atomic energy! Considering what a psychological impact "the bomb" had on the America of the 1950's, this is a staggering revelation!

An Amazing Story... "NO EYES CAN SEE ME!"
STRANGE ADVENTURES
10c
JUNE
INCREDIBLE! THIS PUNY CREATURE IS THE AMAZING LINK BETWEEN APE AND ANIMAL!
WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WERE THE ONLY HUMAN BEING IN THE GORILLA WORLD!

However, upon reflection, it's also not that surprising, because DC was not a company that spent a lot of time dwelling upon the grimmer side of reality or fantasy. There were the occasional downbeat stories in DC comics, but they tended to be more the exception rather than the rule. Even in those stories, the grim aspects of the plots were used, more often than not, as devices to punish evildoers with ironic finishes.

The atomic bomb was the cause of many nightmares in those years. Early Baby Boomers will remember the "duck-and-cover" drills during which we sometimes bumped our heads on our

ALL NEW STORIES
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
TALES OF THE
UNEXPECTED
THE WEIRDEST THINGS HAPPEN—BUT THAT DOESN'T HAPPEN TO STAND IN THE WAY OF STARR'S!
I'll tell you I am James Starr, the missing scientist! You've got to believe me!
FRIEDRICH

THE GORILLA WHO SAVED THE WORLD is the classic cover story on Tales Of The Unexpected #2 (Apr/May 1956). This scarce 2nd issue is exceptionally difficult to find in high grade.

desks after the wail of the air-raid sirens ended. It happened to me. One of my most embarrassing moments was being sent to the school nurse, a casualty of one such drill!

What DC did have in those years, of course, were covers featuring intelligent gorillas and outrageous themes. By now, it's become a joke among DC collectors who recall how often those gorillas popped up on the covers and in the stories, even before the new Flash began his battles with Grodd the Super Gorilla in 1959.

By-the-by, we're including a by-product of our atomic survey: A list of the 1950's DC Gorilla covers! For example, there were no fewer than nine gorilla covers during a 77-issue run of the monthly title *Strange Adventures* (#32-108) after the first gorilla cover appeared in 1951 (on #8). There were no gorilla covers on *House of Mystery* or *Mystery in Space* (unless you want to count "Monkey Rocket to Mars" on the cover of *Mystery in Space* #23), but *House of Secrets* had three, *Tales of the Unexpected* had two and *My Greatest Adventure* had one, all during the 1956-59 period–during which *Strange Adventures* featured six. That means those four titles alone had 12 gorilla covers in a four-year span! And this isn't even counting DC's character titles, in which gorillas ran rampant (hmmmm... just how does a gorilla run rampant? Any way it wants to!)

I wasn't the least bit intrigued by the gorilla covers; my tastes ran more to all the beautiful "horse covers" DC produced during this same period. Nor would I have been attracted to atomic explosion covers, had there been any on the science fiction titles (those atomic covers didn't come along until the 1960s). However, I was fascinated by what I call DC's penchant for outrageous themes in the silliest tradition of grand old-fashioned space opera.

I have also included a list of those. I should note that I realize that "outrageous" is in the eye of the beholder. (I'm generally referring to situations that both science and common sense say are just physically impossible.) My favorite is the cover of *Mystery in Space* #34 (1956), illustrating "The Man Who Moved a World." On this cover, a spaceship of truly mind-blowing dimensions, advertising the "Interplanetary Towing Service," is towing Earth out of danger!

I don't know about you, but I found those types of covers to be nothing less than psychedelic! I can still recall a friend of a practical bent named Landa, making fun of that *Mystery in Space* cover in third grade (to those 40 years ago. Some people just have no imagination!

DC's most famous atomic-themed Silver Age cover is probably *Mystery In Space* #82, featuring Adam Strange trying to prevent "World War on Earth and Rann", as the story is entitled. However, that comic is dated March 1963 (and the story doubtless seems inspired by the Cuban Missile Crisis, which ended in October 1962).

However, the 1960s are beyond the purview of this survey. What the editor requested is atomic-themed stories from the 1950's, so here they are–all 15 of them!

But first, I would like to digress to a most striking issue of *Rex the Wonder Dog*. I'd like to fudge a bit and write about *Rex* #11 (September/October 1953), which has a sensational cover by Gil Kane, including both a dinosaur and an atomic blast!

I can recall seeing this issue in a DC house ad many years ago. I just had to have this issue! How in the world could any writer put a dinosaur and an atomic bomb in the same story? It was quite a few years before I found a *Rex* #11 and discovered the answer. It's a period piece (complete with civil defense instructions), telling how Danny Dennis (Rex's master) and his father Major Dennis were

CBM CHECKLIST

GORILLA COVERS: DC's 1950s SCI-FI

House of Secrets

6 (Oct 1957) "Experiment 1000"
#16 (Jan 1959) "We Matched Wits with a Gorilla Genius"
#26 (Nov 1959) "Menace of the Alien Ape"

Strange Adventures

8 (May 1951) "Evolution Plus!"
#32 (May 1953) "Challenge of Man Ape the Mighty"
#39 (Dec 1953) "The Guilty Gorilla"
#45 (Jun 1953) "The Gorilla World"
#55 (Apr 1955) "The Gorilla Who Changed the World"
#64 (Jan 1956) "Gorillas in Space!"
#69 (Jun 1956) "The Gorilla Conquest of Earth"
#75 (Dec 1956) "The Secret of the Man-Ape"
#88 (Jan 1958) "The Gorilla War Against Earth"
#100 (Jan 1959) "The Amazing Trial of John (Gorilla) Doe"
#108 (Sep 1959) "The Human Pets of Gorilla Land"

My Greatest Adventure

#14 (Apr 1958) "I was a Prisoner in a Human Zoo"

Tales Of The Unexpected

2 (Apr-May 1956) "The Gorilla Who Saved the World"
#14 (Jun 1957) "The Green Gorilla"

thrown into a prehistoric world uncovered by an atomic bomb test. A second atomic bomb destroyed a Tyrannosaurus Rex who threatened Danny, his father and a woman who just happened to be a paleontologist. All in 10 pages! They sure don't write them like this any more.

At any rate, enough atomic digression. Ye editor wants an accounting of atomic themes, so here they are, starting with the only two from the first 56 issues of *Mystery in Space*.

In *Mystery in Space* #1 (April/May 1951, one of the priciest issues) the famed artist, Frank Frazetta, illustrates "The Spores from Space" by Gardner Fox. It's an uncharacteristically downbeat tale of how natives of the asteroid Ceres send the ultimate power source to Earth–only to have it misunderstood, then used inadvertently to send atomic bombs to destroy Ceres! It's one of the grimmest stories in the entire history of DC comics, nicely illustrated by the master.

Mystery in Space #4 (October/November 1951) features "The End of the World" by the prolific Fox and has an EC-like twist ending, in which humans must flee to Mars because an atomic chain reaction causes the world to explode! The twist is that "the world" is the mythical planet Apollo, which supposedly created the asteroid belt when it blew up. At the end of the story, a survivor warns Earth that it must avoid the same danger caused by the use of atomic power.

In stark contrast to these two depressing dramas were the first two atomic-themed stories during this same period in *Strange Adventures*.

Strange Adventures #2 (October/November 1950) contains a Fox tale entitled "The Doom from Planet X" (obviously inspired by "When Worlds Collide," which would be released as a movie the next year), the world's powers were forced to unite to save themselves from a wild planet due to crash into earth. The atomic powers gave up all their stocks of uranium to create enough power to temporarily shift Earth out of its orbit! This was among the early wish dreams of using atomic power for salvation instead of destruction.

In *Strange Adventures* #5 (February 1951), the science fiction writer David V. Reed spins an odd little tale entitled "The Perfect Weapon," in which a spy kills a scientist who has invented a force bubble intended to make cities safe from atomic destruction. The scientist dies before he can remove his demonstration force bubble covering New York. With planes about to gamble on dropping a hydrogen bomb (new in those days), the city is saved when the hero turns off the source of power and the bomber pilot notices a bird flying up from the city.

In the next atomic-themed story, entitled "Hollywood 3000 A.D." by Manny Rubin in *Strange Adventures* #7 (April 1951), New York of the year 3000 is destroyed by hydrogen bombs from Saturnian invaders, as predicted by a film maker in 1951 and witnessed by an actress thrown into a time warp. It's a nonsensical story, noteworthy only for its atomic theme, for there would be no more in either *Strange Adventures*

A DINOSAUR AND AN A-BOMB make the cover of **Rex the Wonder Dog** #11 (Sep/Oct 1953) quite unusual. The tale in issue #11, featuring an A-bomb explosion that uncovers a lost prehistoric world, was a real departure from the regular, non-fantasy fare of the title.

PAGE 15: The pre-code "Double-DC" gem, **Strange Adventures** #45 (Jun 1953), sports another classic gorilla cover and is highly sought after by collectors.

CBM CHECKLIST

OUTRAGEOUS THEME COVERS: DC's 1950s Sci-Fi

Mystery in Space

#13 (Apr/May 1953) "Signboard in Space" (North America is turned into a giant SOS sign)

#22 (Oct/Nov 1954) "The Square Earth" (Earth is no longer round)

#31 (April-May 1956 – "The Day the Earth Split into Two" (a half-Earth floating in space)

#34 (Oct/Nov 1956) "The Man Who Towed the World" (Earth is towed across space)

#38 (Jun/Jul 1957) "The Canals of Earth" (giant canals like those of Mars)

#39 (Aug/Sep 1957) "The Sorcerer of Space" (Earth is locked into a cosmic safe)

#43 (Apr/May 1958) "Invaders from the Space Satellites" (Earth has a giant bullseye on it)

#44 (Jun/Jul 1958) "The Amazing Space Flight of North America" (North America is torn out by a giant spaceship)

#47 (Oct 1958) "Interplanetary Tug of War" (Earth is turned into the object of a game)

#48 (Dec 1958) "Secret of the Scarecrow World" (a giant scarecrow is planted on Earth)

Strange Adventures

#96 (Sep 1958) "Menace of Saturn's Rings" (Saturn's rings are placed around Earth)

#103 (Apr 1959) "The Man Who Harpooned Worlds" (a giant harpoon is aimed at Earth after one has been sent through the moon)

Tales Of The Unexpected

#31 (Nov 1958) "The Day the Earth Stopped" (a giant magnet pulls Earth out of its orbit)

or *Mystery in Space* for nearly two years.

The next atomic theme appeared in *Strange Adventures* #28 (January 1953) in a Captain Comet story entitled "Devil's Island in Space." (Captain Comet, the first acknowledged mutant superhero in comics, enjoyed a three-year run beginning in *Strange Adventures* #9.) In this story aliens used Earth as a dumping ground for criminals, who threaten to steal Earth's atomic resources. Captain Comet foils them, thus preserving a critical H-Bomb test by the United States. This is one of DC's few references to the political importance of Cold War bombing tests.

The remainder of the atomic-themed stories in *Strange Adventures* were "The Road to Nowhere" in #35 (August 1953); "The Eye-Dropper World" in #42 (March 1954); "A World Destroyed" in #55 (April 1955); "Earth's Secret Weapon" in #70 (July 1956); "Secret of the Silent Spaceman" in #82 (July 1957); "War of the Jovian Bubble Men" in #107 (August. 1959) and "Secret of the Last Earthman" in #111 (December 1959).

MAN WHO MOVED THE WORLD qualifies Mystery In Space #34 (Oct/Nov 1956, black cover) as an "outrageous theme cover.

"The Road to Nowhere" in #35 is unique in the annals of DC fantasy comics–it's the only story in which "an aggressor" (obviously the Soviet Union, based on the people in the last panel) is turned aside by the threat of the H-bomb from the United States, complicated by a dimensional rescue. Incidentally, #35 has one of the prettiest of all chess-themed covers–it's pictured in the *PhotoJournal* but collectors of this subgenre ought to check it out.

"The Eye-Dropper World" is another downbeat tale of how mutant microbes mature into creatures wise enough to develop a weapon to combat the atomic bomb–only to be destroyed by a scientist who misunderstands them. "A Switch in Time" tells how an atomic test foils a time-traveler who secretly plants a treasure on the proving grounds, and "The Man Who Couldn't Die" uses atomic tests merely as background for the story of a man who was temporarily turned into an invulnerable spy for aliens. "A World Destroyed" is a 2-page allegory of how atomic war created the asteroids. "Earth's Secret Weapon" uses atomic weapons as background in an alien invasion story. "Secret of the Silent Spacemen" is a clever tale of how aliens trick earthmen into using atom bombs on them because they need nuclear energy to make a life-saving metamorphosis.

In "War of the Jovian Bubble Men," reference is made to a "clean" atomic bomb–one that gives off no radioactive fallout. This was a wish-dream of the time, as reflected by this story.

Finally, in "Secret of the Last Earthman," Martian invaders are defeated by atomic weapons, which the hero was free to use because the rest of the Earth's population had been temporarily shifted into a dimensional time vault.

The only other atomic-themed story I could find was "I Tracked the Nuclear Creatures" in *My Greatest Adventure* #18 (November/December 1957), about how an A-bomb test created monsters. It's grade-Z stuff right out of the movies of the time.

It should be noted that neither "The Atomic Invasion" in *Strange Adventures* #32 (May 1953) nor "The Atomic Sled" in *Tales of the Unexpected* #23 (March 1958) have anything to do with atomic weapons–though they are the only two stories I could find with the word "atomic" in the title!

It's fascinating, then, to note that "The Road to Nowhere" is the only story in a DC fantasy comic in which the Cold War truly plays a realistic part. In the other stories, atomic weapons or atomic power is merely used as background in stories of fantasy.

By the way, I've received several requests for other columns dealing with DC's fantastic funnies. So watch for an upcoming project dealing with DC's unique series characters in these comics… and thanks to everyone who has written. ■

Michelle Nolan is a nationally recognized collector and researcher of comic books from the '40s through the '60s. In real life Michelle works as a freelance journalist.

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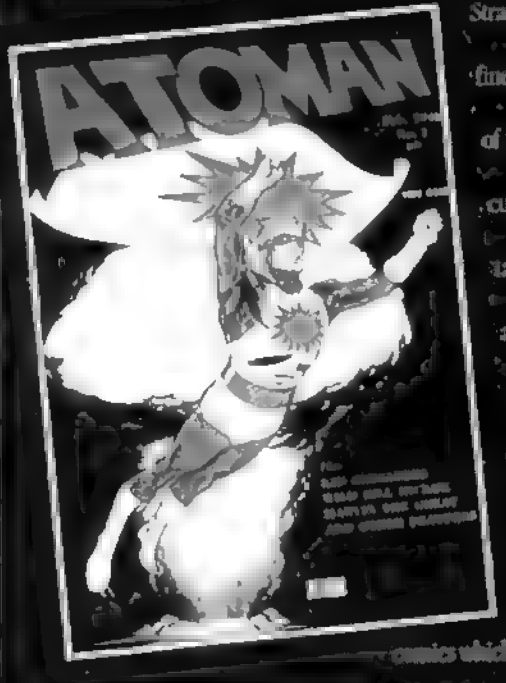
The At

By Robert Deerbohm

Genres come and genres go . . . but the genre that I love best is the Atomic Genre! I began collecting "Atom-Age" comic books during the summer of 1966. I came across Avon's *Atomic Spy Cases* #1 (for a nickel!) –which had come out in early 1950. The book dealt with the "secret agent" interplay of America versus the Soviet Union. This comic was one of the first to urge me to break out of the superhero universe–another was from Julius Schwartz over at DC with the Flash, Green Lantern, Adam Strange, Atomic Knights, etc., and another fine-tuned by Stan, Jack, Steve and the rest of the Marvel Bullpen- which had preoccupied much of my teenage comics fantasies. I was becoming fascinated with all of the pre-code genres that proliferated prior to 1955.



Soon thereafter in another used magazine outlet, for a nickel apiece, I happened upon a few *T-Man* comics which Quality Comics put out between 1951 and 1956. These were pretty good, to my 14-year-old mind. It became a game to find issues that featured Atomic Bomb stories. *T-Man* #20 is great for its H-Bomb explosion cover.

During the next few years, through scanning the ads in the pages of G.B. Love's legendary ad-zine *Another Man's Treasure Comiccollector* (*AMTCC*), I slowly discovered a wide body of work in comic books that centered on the growing fascination the public had with the untapped possibilities of Atomic Energy. I proceeded to collect them all...

There was a one-shot called *Atomic Bomb* from Jay Burtis Publications sometime in 1945 that quite possibly came out before the USA dropped the A-Bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Then Daniels Publications brought out *Atomic Comics* #1 which only had one issue and must have been in conflict with the comic book of the same title from Green Publishing Company that had hit the stands the same month. This title ran just four issues. The first issue of the latter title consists mainly of 1930s reprints of DC stories by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster. Issue #2 sports a pretty cool Matt Baker cover. While a great short run title to collect, unfortunately it doesn't

We knew the world would not be
[illegible] same. A few people laughed,
A few people cried.
Most people were silent.
I remembered the line from
the Hindu scripture,
the Bhagavad Gita...
"I am become Death,
the destroyer of worlds."
I suppose we all thought that,
one way or another.
– J. Robert Oppenheimer
Recalling the first atomic bomb blast near
Alamogordo, New Mexico, July 16, 1945

Atomic Genre!

The Atomic Genre!

1) Atomic Comics #1 (Jan 1946) Green Publishing's first issue sported a "knock off" of the cover to **Detective Comics** #8–which was appropriate since the book featured 1930s DC reprints

2) Atomic Comics #2 (Mar 1946) The second issue's cover makes a strong statement with a demon materializing over the atomic research center.

3) Headline Comics #17 (Jan/Feb 1946) The first "Atomic Man" cover features the hero shooting gamma rays from his fingertips against a background of planet-like spheres.

4) Atomic Comics #1 (Jan 1946) Daniels Publications (Canada) released this one-shot with a crude but appealing super-science-hero cover. It reprinted hero strips from Chesler comics.

5) Atom-Age Combat #1 (Feb 1958, second series) This title was one of the last St. John comics published. It's a meditation on high-tech weaponry and cold war chills that makes an unassuming landmark in the "post-Code ten-cent" era.

6) Headline Comics #18 (Mar/Apr 1946) The gamma gladiator gives an atomic "hot-foot" that makes the underworld dance.

7) Weird Science #18 (Mar/Apr 1953) Wally Wood mixes flying saucers and atomic bombs into a deadly combination on this wonderfully-staged cover that captures the daring spirit of EC at its best.

8) Atomic Attack! #5 (Jan 1953) Youthful Magazines took the offensive in this chapter of the Cold War, with a propaganda-heavy four-issue run. #1 features the only bomb-blast cover of the series.

9) The Atomic Thunderbolt #1 (Feb 1946) The Regor Company's only four-color effort was this scarce early atomic superhero book that undoubtedly received limited distribution

live up to the possibilities the title could have offered, with a more imaginative comics publisher.

As early as 1945, *Atoman* #1 by Jerry Robinson hit the stands from newcomer Sparks Publications. I think this character is the earliest known use of atomic energy as the source of superhuman powers. It must have been rushed into production to come out so soon after the bombs that were used to end the war. The stories are pretty good. There was a second issue in early 1946, but they most likely had postwar distribution problems that couldn't be overcome in time to make a success of this decent title.

Around the same time, Prize Publications brought us *Atomic Man*, beginning in *Headline Comics* #16 (November/December 1945). He had gamma ray powers and made life miserable for the underworld characters that seemed to preoccupy so many comics heroes. The next three issues feature good *Atomic Man* covers, and he last appears in *Headline* #21 (September/October 1946).

Following right on their heels was *The Atomic Thunderbolt* #1 from Regor Company–with the blurb "Introducing the most dynamic Super Sensation in Comic Book Land." Published with a cover date of February 1946, this issue must be quite scarce for I have never seen a copy and must content myself by looking at the picture in Jerry Gerber's book.

The more established 1930s companies still had unused (and prepaid) inventories that centered on fighting Japs and Nazis. They took a while to catch up with the incredible number of small "independent" comic companies who sprang up in the months following World War Two. In the October 1946 issue of *Action Comics* (#101) Superman was filming Atom Bomb testing for the U.S. Government out in the Pacific Ocean. The cover by Wayne Boring and Stan Kaye is stunning in its simplistic clarity with Kal-El imperviously to the effects that would be lethal to an Earthman. Of all the mid-'40s *Action* covers, this one remains my favorite.

That very same month in *Captain Marvel Adventures* #66, Cap battles "the dreaded Atomic War." It is also a classic with Chicago in ruins from a sneak attack and more A-Bombs still raining down from the sky. Captain Marvel has a stunned look on his face and is unable to halt the carnage.

Sometime in 1947 Carl Barks' story of Donald Ducks manufacturing an Atomic Bomb saw print as part of the small 32-page oblong Cheerios giveaways. Disney has banned reprinting this story in its original form, but one can view this classic in the hardcover *Carl Barks Library* Vol 6 Volume I, from Another Rainbow. Of all the duck stories that Mr. Barks produced over the course of 30 years, this is the only one in which the Disney people felt Donald was

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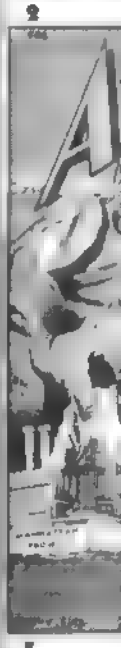
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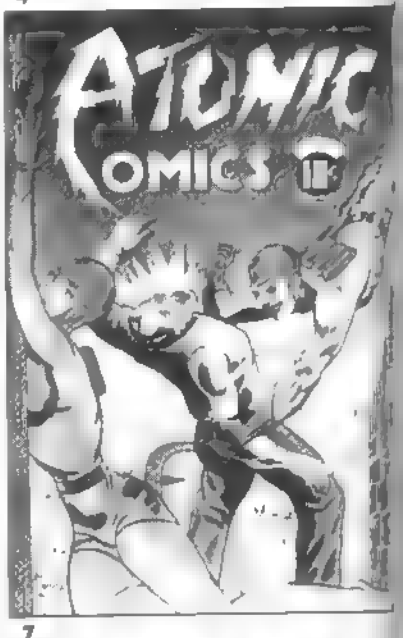

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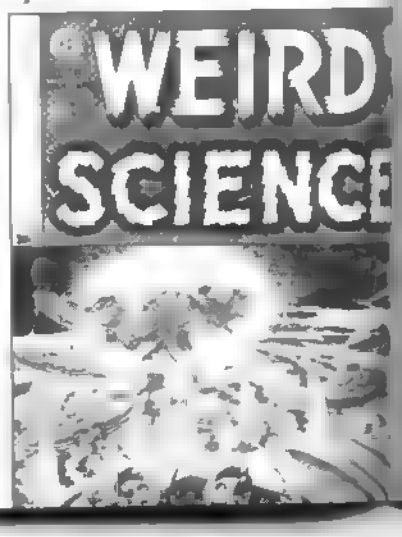

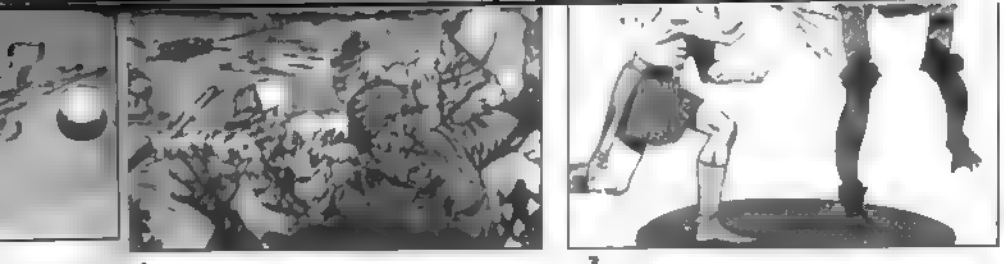

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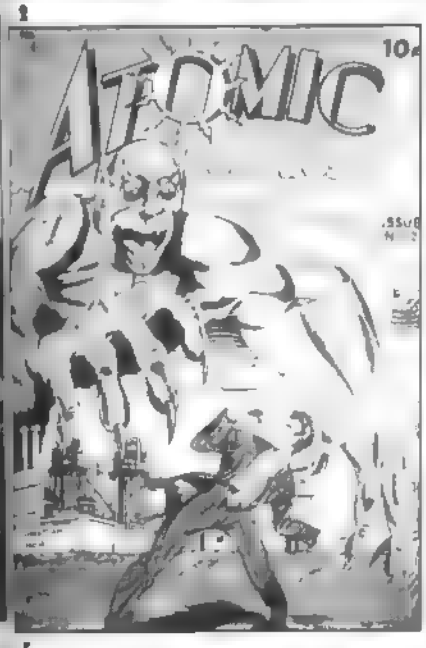

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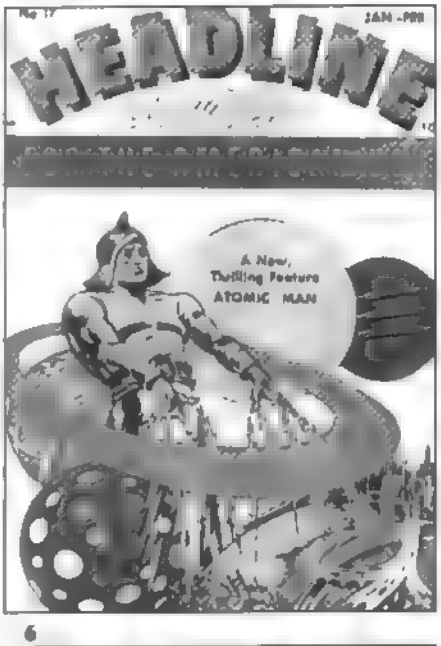

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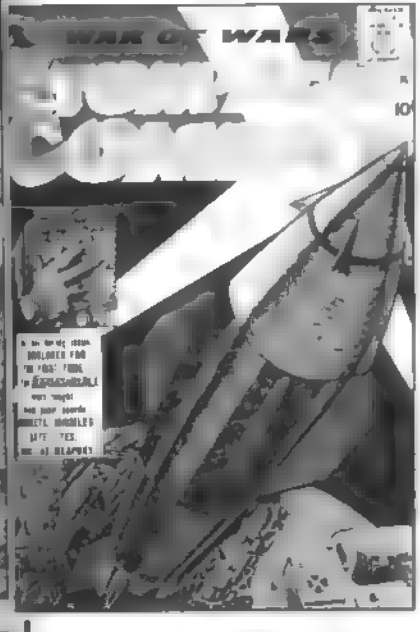

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too "mean spirited" to ever see the light of day again in its original form.

Donald Duck tries to build an A-Bomb. When he sets it off, instead of going "Boom," it simply goes "Fut" and everybody in close proximity to the aborted blast loses their hair—an eerily realistic response when one is exposed to high levels of radiation! What Disney objected to was that Donald then tried to sell people hair restoration cream. Disney made Another Rainbow change the ending so that Donald is giving away "free samples" of his hair restorative in addition to other changes to "soften Donald's attitude."

In 1949 the King Features characters appeared in *Learn How Dagwood Splits the Atom!* With art by "Katzenjammer Kids" artist Joe Musial. This odd comic was "prepared with the scientific advice of several prominent experts in the field of nuclear energy." The main narrative was supplied by Lt. General Leslie Groves who had been in charge of the Manhattan Project. It presented concepts that went beyond blowing up cities, and featured many other King Features characters such as Jiggs and Maggie, Popeye and Olive Oyl, Toots and Casper, and some magic by Mandrake.

In the early 1950s, during the height of the Korean War, there was a small flood of comic books focusing on Atomic adventures. St. John brought forth *Atom Age Combat* during the summer of 1952, with a science fiction slant. Issue #1 has a great but seemingly impossible cover showing Navy Seals rushing up from the ocean and taking on a couple of very close Commie machine gun nests while nuclear blasts are going off in the background. In the second issue a flying saucer invasion is smashed, or so we thought. But issue #3 has the cover blurb "Two worlds clash—one will live, one will die—in this fantastic Struggle for Survival!" By the last issue (#5) the war has been taken out to the stars.

From Ace, we got Atomic War! beginning in late 1952 followed by *World War III* in early '53. These "right wing reactionary" titles contain some of the real classics of the atomic genre. They also tried to be realistic about the perceived Soviet threat to the American way of life.

The first title ran the cover slug, "Only a Strong America Can Prevent Atomic War!" The four issue run is a somewhat interconnected continuity starting with issue #1's sneak attack from the dirty commies. The cover is well done and depicts Manhattan with an A-Bomb going off right by the Empire State Building and immense tidal waves throwing all the skyscrapers around like Tinkertoys. Follow-on issues took America's response back onto USSR soil, then back and forth all over the world.

The latter title from Ace (*WWIII*) let us know that *World War III* was "the war that will never happen if America

"I REPUBLISHED IT"

by Leonard Rifas

Republishing Keiji Nakazawa's comics about the Hiroshima bombing for an American readership is my proudest accomplishment. I first learned of these A-Bomb comics from a guy who had returned from Japan with a small, black and white, saddle-stitched sampler of Nakazawa's "Barefoot Gen" epic, republished in English by volunteers in Japan to help them find a foreign publisher. I borrowed and photocopied the sampler, returned it, and never saw him or a copy of that sampler again.

My editions of Nakazawa's **Gen of Hiroshima** ("Hadashi no Gen") and **I SAW IT** ("Ore wa Mita") were the first Japanese manga republished in American comic book format. I republished Nakazawa's black and white story "Ore wa Mita" at World Color Press in full color, partly because I wanted American fans to have no question that this is a "comic book", and this is what a comic book can do.

I came to Nakazawa's work from a background in underground comix and anti-war activism. Sometimes I've wondered what kind of influence Nakazawa's Hiroshima stories might have had if we had known about them when they were first being published, at the height of America's underground comix and anti-war movements. International communication among cartoonists was very weak in those days. I think one reason I had trouble selling Nakazawa's work in the early 1980s was that many Americans had trouble grasping the idea that there were cartoonists in Japan.

My involvement with Nakazawa's work sharpened my interest in American war comics and nuclear-theme comics. I built up a fine research collection of beat-up old reading copies, and used this collection when writing my MA thesis, "The Forgotten War Comics: the Korean War and American Comic Books," and several smaller articles.

In 1988, the nuclear arms race peaked. In December 1996, twenty-one retired American generals and admirals called for a "continuous, complete and irrevocable elimination of nuclear weapons." Nevertheless, imagining a path to a world beyond nuclear weapons is still very difficult work. Nakazawa strengthens our resolve to do this hard work by helping us to imagine the alternative.

Leonard Rifas has a new catalog of educational-political comics, including **I SAW IT** *and* **Gen of Hiroshima** *(1-3) available for $7 (credited toward first purchase) from Box 45831, Seattle, WA 98145-0831. He also welcomes correspondence at rifas@earthlink.net.*

remains strong and alert. *World War III* # has spectacular cover of Washington D.C. saga became one What If use go up into the air at the base of an A-Bomb blast. Around the same time as these offerings Youthful Magazines gave us *Atomic Attack!* #1 which was actually the first ish. It ran four issues through the summer of 1953.

That same year Charlton brought out *Atomic Mouse* with veteran funny animal artist Al Fago. This was Neal Adams' favorite comic book as a kid and the title ran for ten years! A couple of years later they organized out with *Atomic Rabbit*. About that same DC chipped in *Rex the Wonder Dog* #1 (September 1953) which sports a truly bizarre A-Bomb explosion cover complete with a Tyrannosaurus Rex that keeps attacking in order to defend some people. It remains one of my favorite boffo covers of all time.

The bright and dark possibilities of nuclear power were well represented in the early 1950s science fiction comics (especially EC's) with wonderful adventures that are more than worth while reading during the height of the horror craze. The June 1954 issue of *Black Cat Mystery* (#50) had an incredible cover of a man's face melting after trying to move a vial of radium. This cover stands as the most realistic portrayal of what tampering with this substance could do if one was foolish enough to try.

Commander Battle and the Atomic Sub from ACG premiered in the summer with that first issue done in ACG's "True Vision" 3-D effect style. I remain convinced that the producers of the Disney TV show *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* with their concept of the seaview were inspired by this great title. In the first issue of *Commander Battle* President Eisenhower makes Bill Battle World War II ace and recent divisional director of the U.S. Secret Service the "leader" of America's first atomic submarine—complete with atomic weapons. His crew includes Dr. Edwin Blake (the world's foremost expert on atomic fission), David Ruggles (aka Champ, Olympic heavyweight champion) and Tony" Gardello (a "modern day Houdini"). *Commander Battle and the Atomic Sub* #1 has our heroes fighting it out with flying saucers.

On #3 we have "...an H-Bomb From the Moon" intended to destroy Earth. All seven issues have interesting covers and exciting stories.

G.I. Combat #32 (January 1956, its last year as a Quality title) sports a great Atomic Bomb explosion cover along with stories— Atomic Rocket Assault, Combat Germ Warfare, "Ambush", and "The Red's Last Stand." That same month Charlton published *Fightin' Navy* #74 (the LAST issue!) with a bomb blast at sea cover that certainly earns the "GA" in part rating.

St. John resurrected a single issue of *Atomic Combat* (dated February 1958) to tell us (disclosed for the first time the

Atomic Age Wars fought from pane, boards" Since the comics community was caught in the grip of the newly formed Comics Code, this issue is more educational and less violent

In late 1958, Fago Magazines brought out a two-issue (numbered 2 & 3) run using the same title, *Atom Age Combat* ssue #2 shows a nuclear submarine letting loose with an Atomic Bomb missile from under the ocean with nuclear blasts going off in the distance Issue #3's distinctive cover depicts nuclear multi stage rockets in outer space

DC whose "clean cut" reputation made atomic war themes less appropriate, nonetheless managed a unique atomic menace at the decade's end, in *Mystery In Space* #56 (December 1959) In that now highly collectible issue, Adam Strange contends with the bizarre "Super Atom

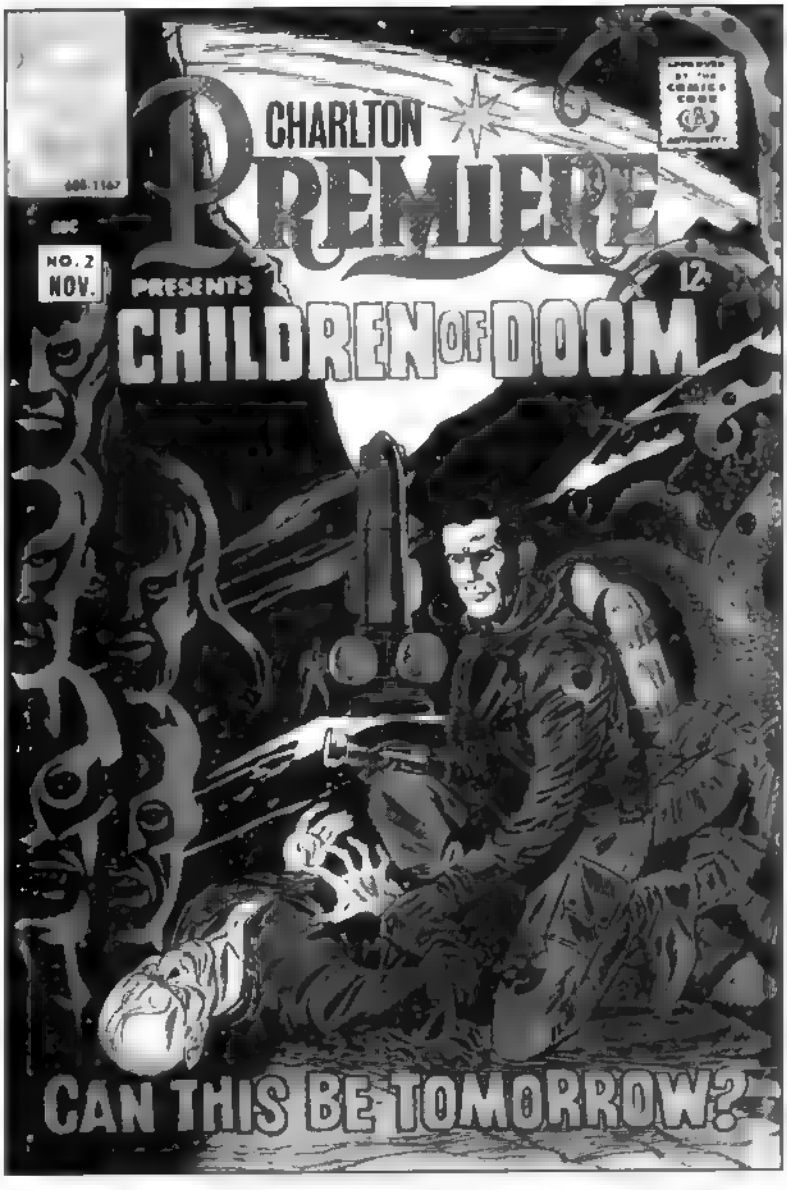
With the beginning of the USA / USSR space race, atomic concepts became more commonplace in many comics as well as on TV and in magazine articles and science fiction novels. A documentary review of the era was prepared by Gilberton as The Atomic Age"–*Classics Illustrated Special Issue* #11 (156A) and came out during the Spring of 1960. The art in this treasure is by former EC greats George Evans and Reed Crandall

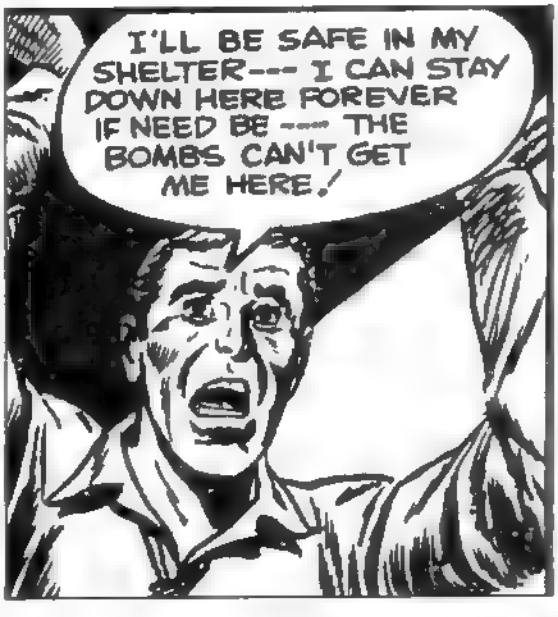
The 1960s saw a continuing use of nuclear themes Jack and Stan had the FF, Spidey, Hulk, Iron Man, the X Men, and other Marvel heroes . all of whom derived their powers from some aspect of atomic energy Gold Key gave us Doctor Solar, Man of the Atom Julius Schwartz, Murphy Anderson, and DC treated us to the Atomic Knights in the pages of *Strange Adventures* from DC, a series that made up for all, the years DC had shied away from the subject There were many others

My favorite issue from the 1960s dealing with the Atomic Bomb war-scare genre is *Charlton Premiere Presents* #2 November 1967 Masterfully edited by veteran Dick Giordano with a tight script by Sergius O'Shaghessy, and superlative art work by Pat Boyette, it's a futuristic tale told by a father to his eyeless young daughter of "how the world ended" brought on by the madness of Atomic weapons used in a final world war The cover has an astronaut looking at a dead atomic mutant with a compelling cover blurb of "Can This Be Tomorrow?" I will not spoil the story by giving any of it away, but I suggest this one to any collectors of this genre as a "must have" issue I never tire of rereading this classic

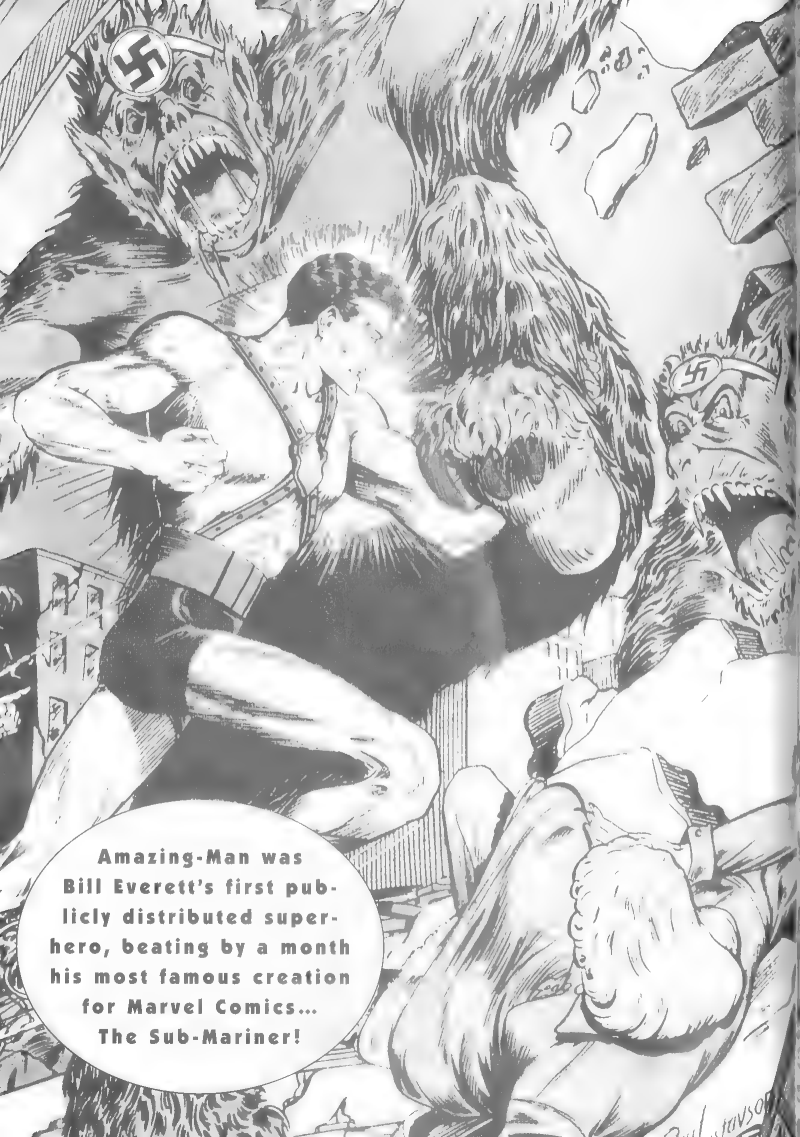
After that, atomic themes continued to appear in mainstream, underground, and independent comics. One particularly noteworthy example was *I SAW IT*, a Japanese cartoonist's eyewitness account of the Hiroshima bombing. When Leonard Rifas began educomics, his first title published in 1982- was a US reprint of this profound and painful work. Decades long in autobiographical scope, *I SAW IT* is simultaneously one of the most awe inspiring and heartbreaking comics I have ever had the good fortune to encounter

The Atomic genre of collecting is a many-faceted gem that has hundreds of issues to pick up and enjoy ■





Charlton Premiere #2 (November 1967) The Children of Doom one-shot ranks as one of the most memorable and moving comics that Charlton ever produced- an honest blend of urgent themes and imaginative storytelling.


Amazing-Man was Bill Everett's first publicly distributed superhero, beating by a month his most famous creation for Marvel Comics... The Sub-Mariner!

Amazing Man!

In the wake of Superman, men of special abilities were churned out by the comic book publishers that sprang up in 1939 and 1940. Although DC was able to squelch the first pretender to Superman ("Wonderman" as produced by Fox Publications), it was unable to stem the inevitable tide of costumed crime-fighters that followed. One of the earliest entries into the super-person sweepstakes was "Amazing-Man", who first appeared in September 1939 in Amazing-Man Comics, produced by Centaur Publications. Amazing-Man has the distinction of being the first "superhero" to debut in his own title.

Amazing-Man finds his origin in Tibet. (East Asia was a popular breeding ground for superheros. This area was the site of the origins of Wonderman in Wonder Comics, The Flame in Wonderworld Comics, The Black Condor in Crack Comics, The Human Meteor in Champion Comics, and others.) An American orphan, Aman was raised and trained by the Council of Seven for twenty-five years. Each member did his part to develop the child to have strength, knowledge and courage. As the first story opens, Aman sits chained before the Council waiting for his final tests before setting forth into the outside world. Six of the Council have endowed him with the benefits of kindness, tolerance, and bravery, but a seventh, "The Great Question", has plans of "dire evil for the perfect boy..."

To prove his status as "an amazing specimen of ultra-manhood", he must pass four tests. The first test is one of strength, wherein he bests an elephant in a pulling contest. The second test (depicted on the cover) has him chained and shackled with a cobra. Just as the cobra strikes, Aman, in a burst of speed and agility, seizes the snake in his mouth. The third test is of his ability to withstand pain as he receives several knives thrown into his body. The fourth test is one of intelligence in which he demonstrates his ability to speak all languages. He passes all tests.

His friend Nika has been working on an invisibility potion. He injects it into Aman and tells him he can will himself to disappear and, in his absence, a thick green mist will appear. Nika gives him a vial of the formula which must be taken once every week. Aman takes the customary pledge to "always do good and never maliciously harm a brother human without just cause".

With that he leaves for America. However, as he leaves, The Great Question, mulls over his own private plot to use his telepathic influence to make Aman do as he commands. The vast majority of the stories center around the conflict between these two individuals.

Amazing-Man had neighboring features drawn by notable artists: "The Iron Skull" by Carl Burgos (his first android creation which was followed by additional androids–The Human Torch for Marvel Comics and The White Streak for Target Comics), Catman by Tarpe Mills (who would render Miss Fury for Timely), features by Paul Gustavson (who would contribute The Angel to Marvel Comics) and the wonderful Frank Hardy fantasy-adventure by Frank Thomas. Additionally, John Kolb contributed Minimidget, the first diminutive hero, who was followed by Eisner and Fine's Dollman in the December, 1939 issue of Feature Comics. Later issues of Amazing-Man featured the unique talents of Basil Wolverton in Meteor Martin–a variation of his classic Spacehawk character.

Amazing-Man was created by Bill Everett and was Centaur's chief entry in the super-hero sweepstakes. Although not the

BY JON BERK

THE AMAZING-MAN

by al severeff

AMAN, KNOWN TO HIS ENEMIES BY MANY ALIASES, THE MOST TERRIFYING OF WHICH IS "*THE GREEN MIST*".....

25 YEARS AGO, IN THE DISMAL COUNTRY OF TIBET, THE *COUNCIL OF SEVEN* CHOSE AN ORPHAN OF SUPERB PHYSICAL STRUCTURE, AND EACH DID HIS PART TO DEVELOP IN THIS CHILD ALL THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A MAN WHO WOULD DOMINATE THE WORLD OF MEN BY HIS STRENGTH, KNOWLEDGE, AND COURAGE

MATURE NOW, THE *AMAZING MAN*, AMAN, SITS CHAINED BEFORE *THE COUNCIL*, WAITING FOR HIS FINAL TESTS, BEFORE SETTING FORTH INTO THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

SIX OF THE COUNCIL HAVE ENDOWED HIM WITH THE BENEFITS OF KINDNESS AND TOLERANCE AND BRAVERY, BUT A SEVENTH, "*THE GREAT QUESTION*," COVETS PLANS OF DIRE EVIL FOR THE PERFECT BOY....

IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, A SLEEP-RAY HOLDS THE LAD MOTIONLESS...

GENTLEMEN!

THE TIME HAS AT LAST ARRIVED WHEN WE MUST QUALIFY OUR EFFORTS OF THE PAST QUARTER OF A CENTURY... OUR CHILD PRODIGY SHALL NOW PROVE HIS STATION AS AN AMAZING SPECIMEN OF ULTRA-MANHOOD. PREPARE HIM FOR THE FIRST TEST!

?

first published work by Bill Everett (which was in Centaur's adventure anthology *Amazing Mystery Funnies* #1 and the Skyrocket Steele feature in the second issue–September 1938). Amazing-Man was Everett's first publicly distributed superhero, beating by a month his most famous creation, The Sub-Mariner for Marvel Comics.

In fact, what makes the early Centaurs so collectible is that the features were drawn by artists who would go on to greater fame with their creations for Timely. In Amazing-Man, Everett introduced elements unusual in the Golden Age–a continuing story line, conflict between two elemental forces (in the case of Amazing-Man, "good" versus the "evil" of The Great Question), and multiple names for his protagonist- "Amazing-Man", "The Green Mist" and "Aman".

William Blake Everett was born in 1917 in Newton, Massachusetts. His childhood years were spent working his family's gold mine claim in the Vulture Mountains in Arizona. From there his family moved to Montana where he learned about being a "cowboy" (which he used as background in some of his A-Man stories and later for a western feature in Target Comics).

Everett was led into cartooning by his father. After his family returned to Massachusetts, and after a short stint in the Merchant Marine, Everett attended art school for a brief time. He joined the art staff of the Boston Herald, but soon moved to New York where eventually he became the art editor for Radio News magazine. After several interim jobs, he joined Centaur Publications and met editor, Lloyd Jacquet. After about a year at Centaur, he joined Jacquet when Jacquet decided to form his own group to produce comic books.

According to his bio that appeared in the November 1939 issue of *Amazing Mystery Funnies* (Centaur profiled many of its artists in the middle issues of this title), Everett was "tall, red-headed, and handsome" and loved to "strum" his banjo and sing songs of the old west. The bio stated that Everett was "crazy about the sea". This intense interest in the sea probably explains the reason that he created several nautical characters- Sub-Mariner (*Marvel Mystery Comics*), The Fin (*Daring Mystery Comics*), Subbie (*Kid Komics*), and Hydroman (*Heroic Comics*). After the Golden Age, Everett produced some wonderful horror art for Atlas in the 1950s Although he went on to work in the commercial art field for a time, he returned to Marvel Comics to draw "Daredevil" and, once again, drew his most famous creation–Sub-Mariner–until his untimely death in 1973.

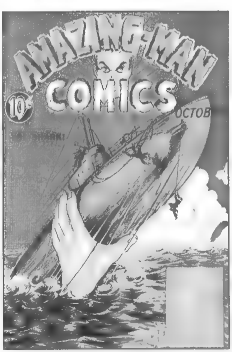
Centaur began publishing in March 1938. The publisher, Joe Hardie, had taken over a number of comic book titles that were floundering (such as *Funny Pages* and *Funny Picture Stories* from Comic Magazine Co./Ultem Publications and *Star Comics* and *Star Ranger Comics* from Harry Chesler). He created a number of new titles with the help of Lloyd Jacquet. Jacquet had been an editor and packager of comics since the beginning, having worked on *New Fun* #1, the first original material comic. In early 1939, Jacquet decided to set up his own company–packaging comics to sell to publishers. He set up Funnies, Inc. with John Mahon (former business manager for National Periodicals and former owner of Comic Magazine Co.) and Frank Torpey. Jacquet took with him from Centaur–Everett, Burgos, Gustavson, and others. Everett became the art director for Funnies, Inc.

Jacquet created one of the first "comic book shops". Along with Iger-Eisner, Jack Binder, Harry Chesler, and others, the shops packaged comic book material to feed the insatiable hunger of publishers. The group that produced the features in *Amazing-Man Comics* were the same folks that used to package the early issues of *Marvel Mystery Comics*. In fact, the premature demise of Centaur in early 1942 can probably be traced to the fact that much of its early talent was absorbed by the needs of larger publishers, such as Timely and Quality.

Amazing-Man appeared in issues #5 through #26 of his own title (not #27 as stated by the *Guide*), and all five issues of *Stars and Stripes*. The first issue was number #5. Although it has been suggested that the title continued from *Motion Picture Weekly Funnies* #1 and the covers numbered #2, #3, and #4, this supposition is probably incorrect. More probable is that *Amazing-Man Comics* continued from *Western Picture Stories* #4, one of the four titles produced by the Comic Magazine Co. Centaur clearly had continued each of the three other CMC titles (*Funny Pages* and *Funny Picture Stories* con-

On Amazing-Man Comics #9 (Feb 1940) He is seen battling Nazis as evidenced by the Swastika arm-band on the right.

Issue #6 (Oct 1939), featuring Everett's Shark cover, is the only issue of the run that didn't give Amazing-Man top billing.



tinued with the same names. Centaur's *Keen Detective Funnies* #8 continued from Comic Magazine's *Detective Picture Stories*, although issues #6 and #7 probably do not exist). Therefore, it is only logical to conclude that Centaur "extended" the run of *Western Picture Stories* with #5 of *Amazing-Man Comics*.

On this early World War II cover (Amazing-Man Comics #8, Dec 1939) Amazing-Man catches a large explosive shell, to the astonishment of his fellow soldiers. The copy shown is from the Lamont Larson collection.

Everett spun the tales through issue #11. Issue #6 reflects an internal struggle as the Great Question attempts to bend Amazing-Man to his will by creating a "monster Aman". He succeeds for a while. In fact, "monster" Aman attempts to take over a criminal gang by brutally killing its leader with a pair of scissors. Eventually Aman is able to re-assert "his" will over himself. However, this is the first of many attempts by The Great Question to gain control.

In issue #8 (December 1939) John Aman reads about the German invasion of Poland and decides to journey to Europe to oppose Hitler. With advance dating of books, this story probably appeared on the stands in late October/early November, not long after the September 1, 1939 invasion by Hitler. As such, Everett probably produced the first comic book story of a superhero journeying to combat the Nazis.

Engaging in aerial dogfights with the Nazis he is eventually shot down, captured, and sent to a concentration camp. Eventually he escapes and joins the French in direct combat against the Germans. He commandeers a plane to bomb Berlin. The story continues in succeeding issues as Everett has Aman raining bombs on the German countryside only to be captured again.

At this juncture he is "ordered" by the Great Question to return to Tibet. Escaping and stealing a plane, Aman finally (#11) returns to Tibet to be "purified" by fire by the Council of Seven. He is instructed not to meddle in the wars of others but to fight for "peace, justice, and right". He is given his chest straps and chest amulet which would serve as his "costume" for the rest of his tales. Additionally, he no longer has to take weekly injections in order to turn into a mist; that power now being in his amulet.

He returns to America where he rescues a woman, Zona Henderson, from some treasure hunters. With this tale, Everett's tenure ended. However, the adventures of Amazing-Man–John Aman, special investigator–Aman–The Green Mist - were handled by Al Kirby and Sam Decker. These succeeding adventures involved elaborate machinations of The Great Question to lure Aman to a deathtrap.

In early adventures Aman had the strength of twenty men (#14); it dramatically escalates by #15 wherein he lifts up a whole submarine. By issue #20 (February 1941) fifth columnists and saboteurs are introduced, who are usually flunkies of The Great Question. The Great Question abandons his hood of earlier stories for a face mask and uniform that is obviously Nazi in design. Amazing-Man foils plot after nefarious plot of Mister Que (as he is now called) who now is working openly with the Nazis. (As he tells Hitler in issue #22, "Call me 'Mister Que', it's much shorter".) However, every time Aman is

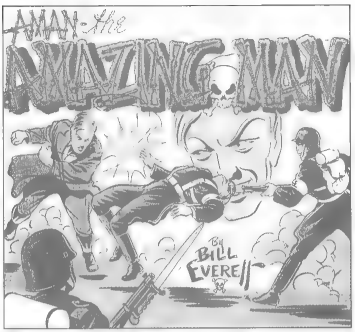
about to capture him, Mister Que uses his "black magic" to escape. In #22 (May 1941), Aman foils a scheme in which Mister Que has frozen the English Channel so the Nazi war machine can invade England.

After being a monthly publication since #9, issue #22 was a month late and #23 didn't appear until three months later (August 1941) wherein Amazing-Man gets a boy companion. (Several stories of Amazing-Man continued in *Stars and Stripes* which started in May 1941. Interestingly, the story in the July 1941 *Stars and Stripes* picks up the story line from *Amazing-Man* #22. However, the preceding story in the May issue of *Stars and Stripes* (#1) has Zona whisked to Tibet to be given powers to aid Aman in his fights.

This storyline is never pursued, apparently due to an editorial decision to give Amazing-Man a boy companion á la "Robin" as opposed to a "woman side-kick". Coupled with the bi-monthly rescheduling of the title, the addition of a boy companion was an obvious attempt to boost sagging sales. The boy side-kick is Tommy, Zona's brother. Tommy enters Aman's secret room as Aman contacts Nika in Tibet. Aman is seeking greater powers to battle The Great Que. Nika floods the room with rays to increase his strength. Many of these rays also strike Tommy–hiding behind the couch- giving him great power.

Tommy, the "boy wonder" (sound familiar?), outfits himself with a yellow shirt with a large red "T" on it. His presence in the stories is most often superfluous, as he is usually more interested in where he can obtain his next ice cream soda rather than aiding Aman. Aman and Tommy battle Nazis until the last issue–January 1942. With this issue of *Amazing-Man*, Centaur ceased publication. Several inventory features and previously printed features were published and later as distributed by Chicago Mail Order Company in Liberty Guards, C-M-O Comics, and, a publishing oddity of a comic book with the *Amazing Mystery Funnies* logo on the cover to *Amazing-Man* #23.

Amazing-Man remains a short-lived but significant character of the Golden Age–because of its legendary creator, Bill Everett. The title is important because of the host of renowned artists who contributed features, making it eminent among the enterprising Centaur line of comic books. ■



The splash panel from the first comic book story to pit a superhero against a Nazis (**Amazing-Man Comics** #8, Dec 1939) features an exuberant signature by author, artist, creator, and legend… Bill Everett.

A close-up of the cover art on the extremely rare **Amazing Mystery Funnies** nn. The AMF logo was pasted onto the cover of **Amazing-Man** #23 to create the no-number issue and came out after Centaur's demise.

Jon Berk is the president of the AACC and is a nationally known comic book collector, researcher, and historian. Jon's first love is early Golden Age comics.

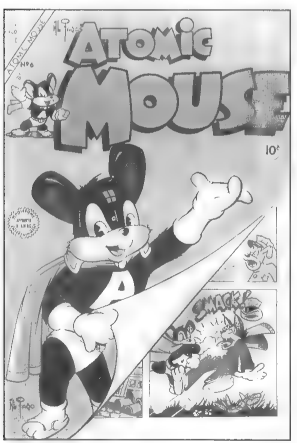
Ah, yes. Atomic Energy.

In the early 1950s, it was the subject on the tip of every American tongue. Some saw the splitting of the atom as a panacea for the world's ills–a beacon signaling great advances in energy resources, travel, and medicine. Others saw only a grim, portentous signpost that marked the dark highway mankind was following to its inevitable doom! But hey! Lighten up! If you were a young funny animal fan, chances are, what you saw was an endless parade of jazzed-up, juiced-up critters; four-legged uranium pill-popping rodents, rabbits, and kittycats. At least that's what the folks at Charlton hoped you'd see.

Atomic Mouse #6 (Jan/Feb 1954) Charlton lets Atomic Mouse do his version of the "peel-back" front cover, ala **WDC&S #1** & **Superboy #1**.

From their executive offices in Derby, Connecticut, Al Fago, Pat Masulli, and the gang cranked out a veritable herd of atomic powered household pets and pests. Charlton's first offering was Atomic Mouse, popping onto the scene in his own book cover-dated March 1953.

Early appearances of Atomic Mouse were the work of artist Al Fago. Mr. Fago introduces us to mild-mannered and long-suffering Cimota Mouse in a story called "A Star Is Born", where he is busy laboring under the oppressive thumb of Count Gatto, the world famous magician. Pathetic little Cimota spends most of his time in chains, except when the Count needs him for knife-tossing target practice and other such stunts. One night while performing in Atomic City, Count Gatto, in the course of his act, shrinks Cimota Mouse to the size of an atom. In fact, Cimota meets several living, breathing atoms, who just happen to be quite good seamstresses as well as a drug-pushing, curiously moralistic bunch. They sew him a costume, lecture him on working for the good of the world, then pump him full of uranium tablets. He's given a whole stash of U-235 pills to hide in his belt buckle. As he takes a pill and returns to his normal size, one of the ever-blabbing atoms tells the supercharged rodent: "You will have to spell your name backwards from now on...it's Atomic Mouse!"



So Atomic Mouse sets out on his new career to "help keep law and order." Of course, this includes regularly pounding the giblets out of the evil Count Gatto, who earns his drubbings throughout the run by building robot bank robbers, derailing spaceships, duping lunkheaded Dogmen from Mars, hi-jacking flying carpets, importing giant cats from space, unbottling belligerent genies, and endless others bits of tomfoolery. Through it all, Atomic Mouse keeps dropping tabs of U-235 and powering up to new heights. In fact, as you'll soon see, this business of charging up on U-235 pills stashed in the belt buckle was a popular notion with the boys in the Charlton offices.

The second Charlton animal to become imbued with atomic power was Atomic Rabbit, debuting in August, 1955. He enjoyed an eleven-issue run, ending with one of those wonderful Charlton giants in March, 1958, after which he was revived as Atomic Bunny. Atomic Rabbit becomes empowered when he unwittingly eats a radioactive carrot, given to him by the wife of the ex-mayor of Rabbitville. One bite turns him into Atomic Rabbit, complete with super strength, super hearing, x-ray vision, and the power of flight. Pop Fox, a conniving and villainous cretin who usurped the mayor's office and proceeded to lord it over the flop-eared residents of Rabbitville, is soon ousted and the original mayor reinstated (rather like an atomic-powered recall election). In any case, Atomic Rabbit is invited by the mayor to "stay forever", which prompts him to immediately fly to Washington, D.C., with soil samples from the carrot patch.

Yup. You guessed it. U-235 in the carrots, folks. A hollow belt buckle is hastily fashioned to house the "U-235 uranium carrots" and yet another star is born.

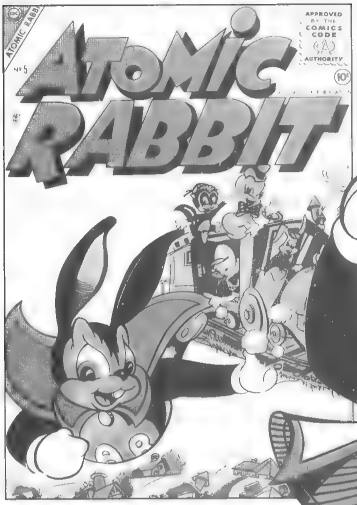
As with *Atomic Mouse*, Al Fago is the artist on the early issues of *Atomic Rabbit*. As time goes by, Maurice Whitman takes over some of the art chores, as do a couple of other artists. Pop Fox becomes known as Sly Fox, and Atomic Rabbit makes some interesting friends, one of whom (introduced in issue #4) is named Goofy and is a pretty obvious knock-off of the Disney character; he even delights in the frequent use of the exclamation "Gawsh."

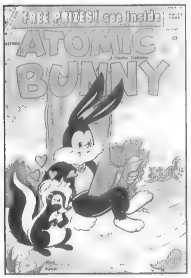
Atomic Rabbit's young sidekick also appears frequently. He is known by the ingenious monicker of "Li'l Rabbit." All of the Charlton atomic animals seem to be afflicted with these generically-named tag-along atomic-wannabes. Atomic Mouse has Li'l Mouse. Atom the Cat has Li'l Cat. And when Atomic Rabbit inexplicably becomes Atomic Bunny with issue #12, August 1958, guess what Li'l Rabbit gets called from then on? You got it.

Other than names, few things seem to change. Atomic Bunny still gobbles U-235 carrot cubes from his belt buckle, and he still clobbers Sly Fox in story after story. His home town is now Bunnyville, of course. Fago gets help on the artwork from Pat Masulli and John D' Agostino, among others, who continue Atomic Bunny through issue #19, dated December 1959.

Atomic Animals

By Steve Sibra

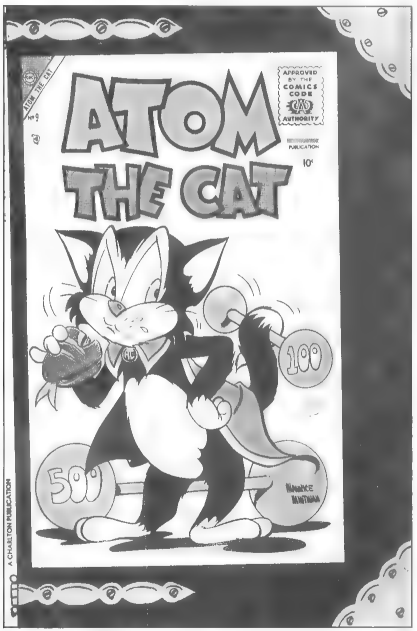




Atomic Rabbit #5 (Oct 1956, ABOVE) is a classic example of Al Fago's fine cover work on the Charlton atomic animal titles.

Atomic Bunny #19 (Dec 1959, LEFT) Even atomic-powered superhero animals have their peaceful, literary side.

Atom The Cat #9 (Oct 1957) is the first issue, with numbering continued from **Tom Cat** and featuring a cute and clever cover by Maurice Whitman.



This run does contain several stories that are a bit more bizarre plotwise than the Charlton atomic norm. Issue #14 has a five-pager called "Sly Fox's Trail", which is made up entirely of illustrated song lyrics, written in rhyme and intended to match the tune of "The Old Chisolm Trail", a traditional cattlemens' campfire song. That issue also has an unusual backup story wherein the Easter Bunny gets busted and stands trial for showing favoritism.

In issue #16, Atomic Bunny encounters the Pumpkin People and the Corn Creatures in a rather strange eight-page fairy tale which centers around yet another Atomic Bunny/Sly Fox conflict but contains more than the usual effort put into plotting and supporting characters. Also in this issue, Atomic Bunny opens a story by punching out an entire herd of cattle for no apparent reason, and then polishing off a passing cross eyed rhinoceros for good measure. Now I hail from Montana originally, where we had lots of cows and rabbits... but some how prairie living was never quite like this. Of course, we never let the livestock graze in the U-235 patch, either.

One of the more delightful things about all the Charlton atomic animal comics are the backup stories and characters. These seem to have come out of nowhere, been conceived in a flash and forgotten just as quickly, many appearing only once. Some of the more intriguing creatures littering the pages of these books include Simon Skunk, Hoggy Pig, Willie the Worm, Orsen Buggy, Mumps Rabbit, Prudence Platypus, Big Ear Bunny (this would've been a great name for a blues singer) and Leon the Lyin' Lion. Quite a rogues gallery to be sure.

Charlton's final atomic animal was Atom the Cat, who debuted with issue #9, October 1957. *Atom the Cat* picked up its numbering from a non-superpowered funny animal named Tom Cat. However, it doesn't appear that Tom Cat actually became Atom, since Tom continued to appear as a backup character in numerous Charlton humor titles-including *Atom the Cat*.

Atom's comic ran for nine issues, ending in August 1959 with #17. The same general group of artists toiled on *Atom the Cat*, with Maurice Whitman probably getting the largest share of the work.

In "From Alley to Atom" in issue #9, a hungry, down-on-his-luck alley cat, looking for shelter, sneaks into what he thinks is a deserted shack. However, two weird scientists have been using the shack for experiments in atom-splitting. When the alley cat snoozes off by the reactor, he miraculously absorbs the "atomic rays" and becomes Atom the Cat.

However, after a few brief atomic adventures, Atom's power seems to fade. The scientists train their trusty Geiger counter on him; sadly, there is no response. "He has no more power. Not a (sob) peep out of the Geiger counter!" one laments. Atom, however, waxes philosophical. "From alley to atom...and right back again!" he muses. "But it was fun while it lasted! And I'm gonna keep the name of Atom the Cat... I sorta like it!"

But has his power really gone? Don't bet on it, folks! In this issue's third and final story, we discover his atomic power has returned! It seems that if Atom goes too long without a big fish dinner, his atomic power fades, but as soon as he gorges himself with fresh fish, he powers right up. The two scientists equip him with a regal cape and convince him to work hard to help his country and the world. And don't forget to chow down on the halibut!

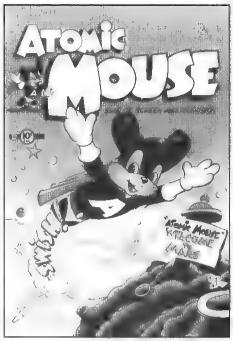
In later issues, Atom's two main nemeses are introduced. They are two dogs named Long John (a dachshund) and Boston Bulldozer (a bulldog), second-story men who usually leave their brains on the first floor. The slovenly act of constantly shoveling in raw fish is also replaced, in issue #12, with "fish cubes", a less offensive device which is very similar to the carrot cube/U-235 power supply used by the other Charlton atomic animals.

Throughout his title run Atom the Cat is, like the other atomic animals, civic-minded above all else. He builds at least

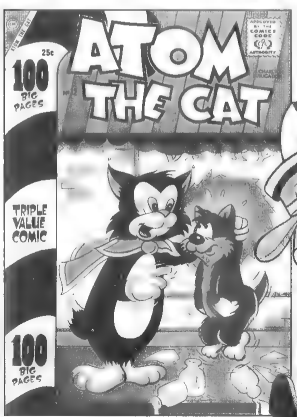
two dams in Africa, puts out countless forest fires, corks volcanoes, and helps the Atomic Energy Commission on a variety of occasions. With the ability to accomplish such amazing feats, I was at first perplexed when I saw that in issue #15 he spent an entire story helping someone whose pants were too long, trying to get him to stop tripping over his pantlegs. How could such a trifling problem require such effort to solve? Hasn't Atom ever heard of cuffs? Then I reviewed the corps of Charlton atomic animals. Even though most of them wore belts, it was only in order to have a spot to stash their U-235 tablets. Not one of them wore pants. Only Atomic Mouse had even the smallest amount of social conscience necessary to at least don a tight-fitting pair of yellow bikini briefs. Like his atomic brethren, Atom the Cat was ill-prepared to face an adversary such as pantlegs.

As America's obsession with atomic energy was replaced by other modern marvels, the cast of atomic animals at Charlton also began to fade. Atomic Mouse had the longest life (half-life?) of the bunch, hanging around for 54 issues, until 1963. He is the only atomic-powered animal remembered by many fans. But for a while, in '57 or '58, it was possible to spend more than a few dimes each month, keeping up with the adventures of Atomic Mouse, Atomic Rabbit, Atomic Bunny and Atom the Cat, those fabulous forgotten atomic animals of the '50s. ■

Steve Sibra lives with his wife and cats in eastern Montana.



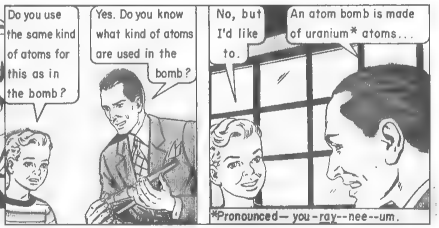
Atomic Mouse #1 (Mar 1953) Charlton's first atomic animal, taking the Mighty Mouse concept to the next level. The back cover with its beautiful back-cover pinup series.



Atom The Cat #12 (Aug 1958) is one of the oodles of all-new, non-reprint Giants Charlton produced during 1958.

How comic books learned to stop worrying & love the bomb!

FOUR FALLOUT FUNNIES


Do you use the same kind of atoms for this as in the bomb?
Yes. Do you know what kind of atoms are used in the bomb?
No, but I'd like to.
An atom bomb is made of uranium* atoms...
*Pronounced— you-ray--nee--um.

By Michael Naiman

Giant bugs, post-Atomic holocausts, reawakened prehistoric dinosaurs and flying saucers were some of Hollywood's contributions to the dawn of the Atomic Age. Filling the newsstands of the late '40s and early '50s, our favorite four color funnies also fueled the atomic fireball of fear, fright and frenzy that was gripping the nation.

Amid the hysteria and paranoia of the times, there were a few comic book publishers that not only attempted to educate the public regarding the benefits of this newfound energy source, but also entertain their readers at the same time! Nearly every comic character from Dagwood to ducks were used to help educate and mold public opinion.

I will never forget those afternoons in the late fifties when the ear piercing howl of the air raid siren would go off and my heart would jump into my throat. "Just testing the system!" we were told. Living in the "military town" of San Diego was like living in the very center of a nuclear bullseye. I didn't think the "duck-and-cover" routine we practiced in school or jumping into the backyard fallout shelter would be very effective if "The Big One" dropped.

I recently had the opportunity to change the air filters

in Scott Shaw's! comic book fallout shelter and stumbled across some classic examples of nuclear newsprint that I'm sure no one has seen since the Eisenhower era! What a collection! One book has been banned by Disney, another was originally produced as a short cartoon, and still another is a sugar-coated *Classics Illustrated* presentation. All of them register in the terminal red-zone of the Geiger counter of amusement!

The Mighty Atom

Remember Reddy Kilowatt… that zig-zag bolt of energy who graced the television airwaves of America in the '50s. (It has been speculated by some that he is actually the illegitimate son of Gyro Gearloose's lightbulb-headed friend "Little Helper" …but that's another story!) In Reddy's own 32 page book from Western Publishing, *The Mighty Atom* (based on the 1959 motion picture of the same name) we are treated to a history of electricity from amber to the atom! The indicia indicates that this comic book was available for distribution by utility companies across the nation (the sub crease on this issue reflects that it was probably mailed out to all who requested a copy). We follow Reddy and his history from the times of the Greek philosopher Thales all the way to the "modern" age of space travel and "calculating machines." Who could forget the catchy little tune that closes out the book?

"I'm a real live wire; And I never tire; Yes sir… I'm a red-hot shot; I can cook your meals; Turn the factory wheels; 'Cause I'm Reddy Kilowatt!

When you toast your toast; Or you roast your roast; It is I who makes 'em hot. I'm in your TV set; With every show you get, 'Cause I'm Reddy Kilowatt!"

Donald Duck's Atom Bomb

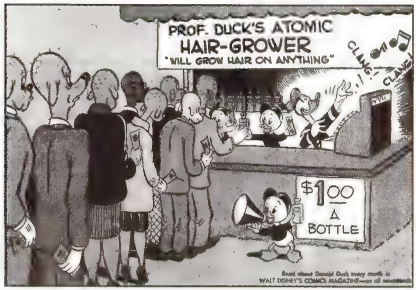
While our little Envoy of Electricity was "toasting our toast" around the breakfast table, many will remember the sacred ritual of mining the cereal box for the special giveaway that always seemed to be hidden at the bottom. If you were really lucky, you retrieved the Cheerios Giveaway Y1, 1947, entitled "Donald Duck's Atom Bomb." The 32 page 3 ¼ x 7 inch giveaway (with art and story by Barks and a snappy cover drawn by Carl Buettner) has only been seen in a modified version in *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* #571 (1992) and *The Carl Barks Library of Donald Duck Adventures* #6 (1994).

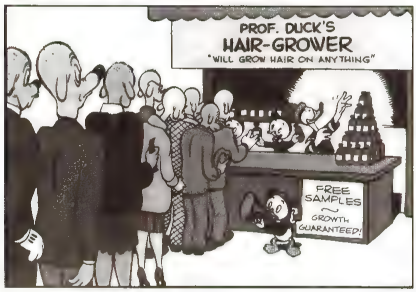
The multi-talented Donald has assembled an atom bomb by mixing ingredients consisting of "one jigger of mashed meteors… two spoons of comet dust… juice of one lightning bolt." The resultant concoction is an ultrapowerful explosive brew that goes "Fut" instead of "Boom." Donald consults with Professor Mollicule who then decides to bring Professor Sleezy, the great foreign expert with the bad accent, into the picture. Of course Sleezy is really a spy, steals the formula, accidentally sets off the bomb's fuse and disposes of it by hurling it into the river. The bomb still explodes and "the ghastly rays" sweep the city causing everyone's hair to fall out! Sounds frighteningly like radiation poisoning to me!

Military might subdues headstrong hysterical child.

In the original version the next to the last panel has Donald saying "I've got a way picked out to make money…and lots of it!" The Disney folk decided that this made Donald look a bit too greedy and self-serving and changed the text to say "No thanks, Professor! I've got more than money on my mind!" The original art in the last panel has Donald gleefully ringing up sales on the cash register while the poor baldies held fists full of dollars to buy his hair growing potion at a dollar a crack! This has now been changed to reflect Donald in a "kinder and gentler" light, giv-

ing away free samples of hair-grower that he is gingerly removing from a stack of bottles that have been drawn in to replace the pre-existing cash register.





Disney censors replace the cash register, fists full of dollars, and signs in the redrawn last panel of Donald Duck's Atom Bomb.

Andy's Atomic Adventures

Leaving Duckburg to deal with its follicle fallout, we journey to the beautiful glass blown flats of the Nevada desert, home to our nation's atomic test grounds! We'll take the off ramp to friendly Middletown, Nevada, where we will encounter "Andy's Atomic Adventures." Appearing in *Picture Parade* #1 (September 1953), this is a Gilberton Company production that has one of the all time classic covers to grace the Atomic Age. Get out your diabetic insulin dear readers, for this cover has it all: a boy, his devoted dog, and an atomic bomb!

The opening scene has Andy's dad driving Mom to the doctor for her final radiation treatment. While she's getting zapped, Andy is out collecting mutant butterflies and discovers later that Spot has run away into the atomic test site area. Bereaved at the apparent loss of his pet, Andy wails that Spot will be killed by the bomb, after all he exclaims, "That atom kills everything!" What follows is the expected explanation of how our friend the atom can help mankind. Later, Andy receives a letter from the test grounds indicating that Spot has been found alive. Finding Spot caged in the lab, Andy is restrained from touching him because Spot has picked up some radioactive dust and is contaminated. Another explanation ensues on the benefits of uranium, atomic cannons, and clean energy that will power a nation.

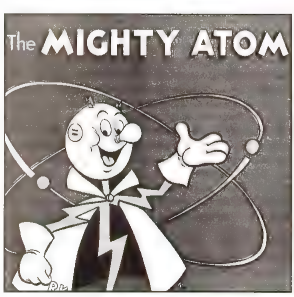
One week later, boy and dog are reunited. As the family drives home, Andy reflects on how wonderful it will be when atomic energy is utilized in a productive manner. What is left unanswered is what caused Spot to sire a three headed dog (aptly named Plutonium, Strontium, Thorium) and why does Spot glow at night?

Dagwood Splits the Atom

That dark question and others will be answered by none other than Dagwood Bumstead and a cast of characters direct from King Features! Published in 1949 by the educational division of King Features Syndicate, Inc. *Dagwood Splits the Atom* is an answer to an insomniac's prayers! With an introduction by General Leslie R. Groves (who, according to this comic, headed the development of the atomic bomb) and another brief explanation by Joe Musial (Stan's brother?), this 32 page yawner has Mandrake the Magician using his slight of hand powers to shrink the entire Bumstead family "...so that we can see what wonderful companions atoms are." This illustrated text manual takes us step-by-agonizing-step through the exciting world of the atom. Where's Ray Palmer when you need him?

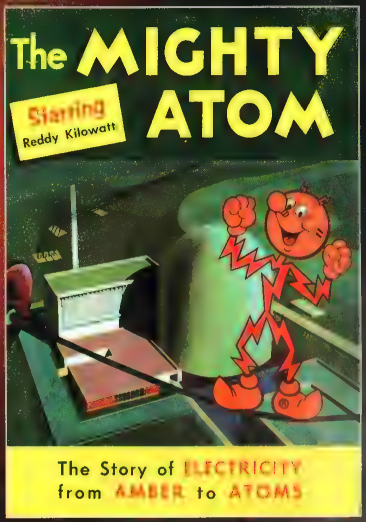
Despite occasional forays into the pedantic, the fallout funnies put some fun into (or unintentionally poked fun at) what we all knew was a pretty grim business–the splitting of atoms. And for today's collectors, these comics have become yet another interesting, historic, and quite collectible little subgenre. ■

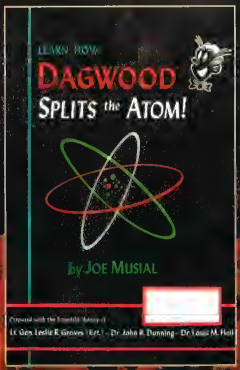
Reddy Kilowatt prepares to supercharge the modern world with atomic energy.



Gilberton climbed aboard the nuclear propaganda bandwagon with "Andy's Atomic Adventures" in the rare and highly collectible **Picture Parade** #1 (Sep 1953).

The Cheerios cereal premium, **Donald Duck's Atom Bomb** (1947), contains a classic Carl Barks story... partially rewritten by Disney censors.





The scarce giveaway, **The Mighty Atom** (1959) was based on the cartoon of the same name and starred utility company mascot, Reddy Kilowatt.

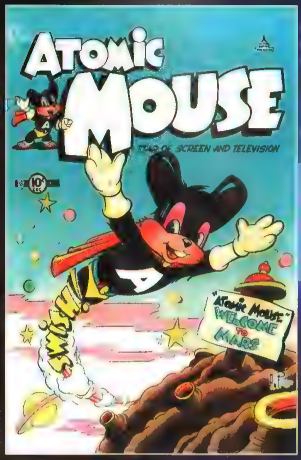
King Features Syndicate comic strip characters were enlisted for "atomic propaganda" in the science **Dagwood Splits the Atom** (1949).

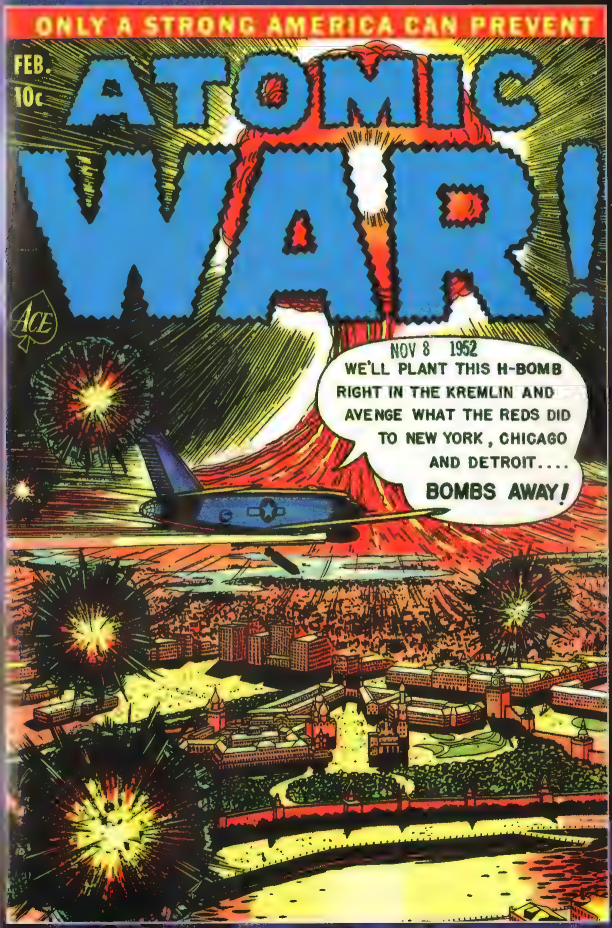
Atom age creation, Atomic Mouse, flew to Mars on the cover of the inaugural issue (Mar 1953). The radioactive rodent was the first of Charlton's nuclear-powered funny animal heroes.

It's dog vs. dinosaur on the bizarre atomic-bomb-blast cover of **Rex, the Wonder Dog** #11 (Sep 1953).

The incredible Captain Marvel Atomic War cover on issue #66 (Oct 1946) is only a prelude to the fabulous story inside.

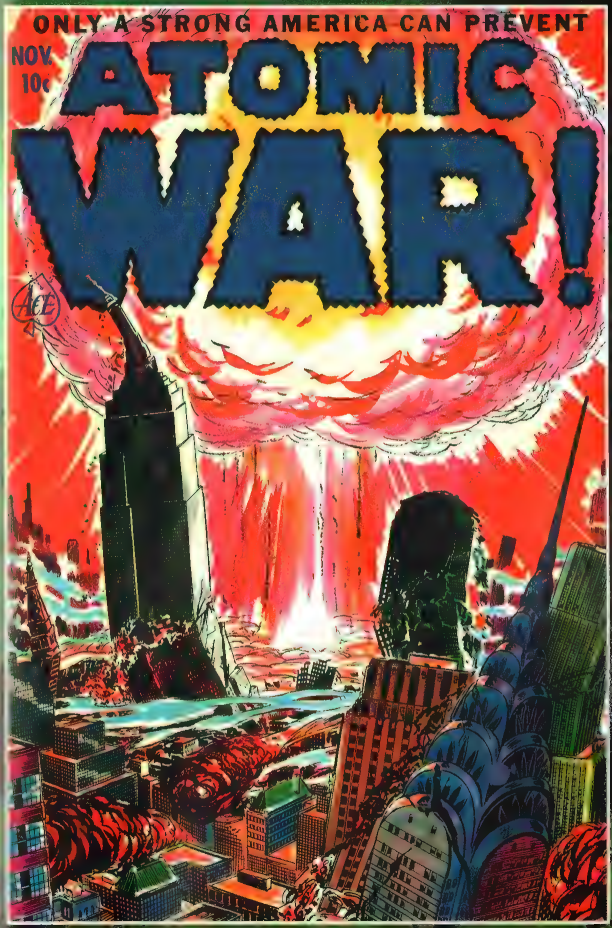
Years before Irwin Allen's film "Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea", ACG published **Commander Battle and the Atomic Sub**. Issue #3 (Nov/Dec 1954) featured the threat of an "H-bomb from the moon" on the cover.




ONLY A STRONG AMERICA CAN PREVENT
FEB.
10c
ATOMIC WAR!
ACE
NOV 8 1952
WE'LL PLANT THIS H-BOMB RIGHT IN THE KREMLIN AND AVENGE WHAT THE REDS DID TO NEW YORK, CHICAGO AND DETROIT....
BOMBS AWAY!

After New York, Chicago and Detroit, suffer atomic destruction at the hands of the Soviets, the USA retaliates by H-bombing Moscow on the cover of **Atomic War!** #3 (Feb 1953). Note the arrival date (Nov 8, 1952) neatly stamped at the top of the word balloon, indicating that this issue was on the stands at least three months before the cover date.

A mushroom cloud billows behind the blown-away Capitol Dome as Washington, D.C. takes an atomic hit on the cover of **World War III #1** (Mar 1953). This politically potent title from Ace (as well as its companion issue on the facing page) are both highly collectible first issues from an "esoteric" publisher best known for its world renowned paperback publishing empire. Many collectors and comic book historians have recently speculated that both of these covers were possibly used as inspirational graphics for several scenes from the recent box office smash, **Independence Day**. In the film, the Capital Dome and the Empire State Building are used as "ground zero" for the alien super-weapons, whose destructive effects are similar to that of an atomic explosion.



Atomic War #1 (Nov 1952) by an Ace Publishing artist renders his interpretation of a direct hit on New York City. This cover's classic image of a nuclear nightmare makes it one of the most collectible and sought after Atom Age comics. Note the Empire State Building (left center) in the background and the Chrysler Building (right foreground).

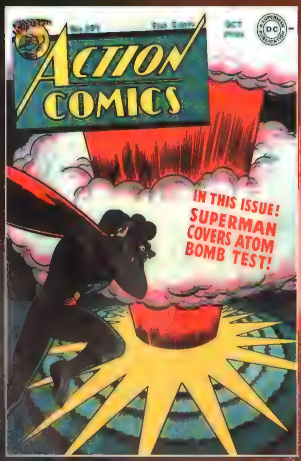
Both of these books have sold for record prices during 1996-97 (auction and mail order) with high-grade copies bringing significant multiples of Guide.

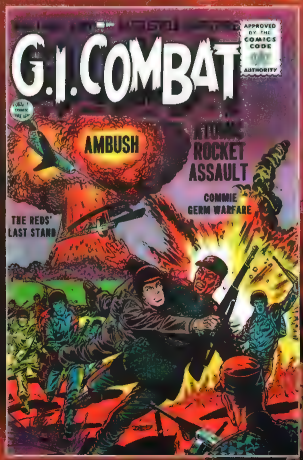
Thought to be the first of its genre to feature an atom bomb explosion on the cover, **Action Comics** #101 (Oct 1946) turns nuclear hellfire into one of the most memorable Superman post-war collectibles.

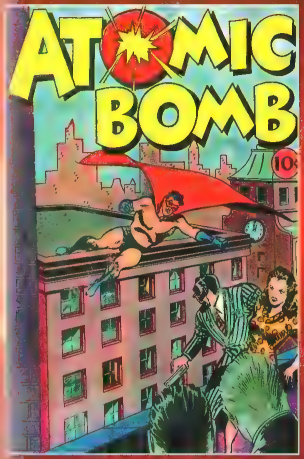
Al Fago's plans to start a full-scale comics company were derailed by distribution problems, hence, surviving copies of Fago titles (including this specimen of **Atom Age Combat** #2, Jan 1959) are more difficult to find than most other books from 1959.

The folly of Atomic War is glimpsed from the vantage point of outer space on EC's **Weird Science** #5 (Jan/Feb 1951).

The Cold War was warm enough to warrant an issue of **G.I. Combat** (#32, Jan 1956) full of Commie clashes, atomic battles, germ warfare hysteria, and nuclear paranoia.

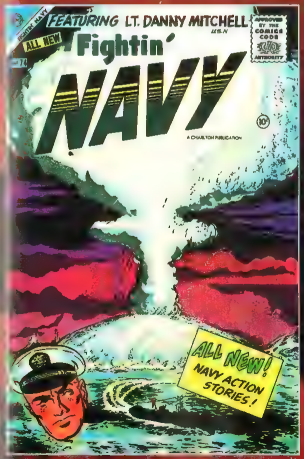






The main claim to fame of the unique one-shot **Atomic Bomb** (1945) was that its date of publication may well have preceded the actual dropping of the A-bomb in the summer of 1945.

Treasury Agent Pete Trask defuses the H-bomb in the story "Project Doom" (**T-Man** #20, Dec 1954), but it was allowed to explode on the cover to capture attention at the newsstand.



This obscure "first issue" from Charlton Comics (**Fightin' Navy** #74, Jan 1956) is one of the more difficult of the genre to find.

DC's **Strange Adventures** #226 (Oct 1970) is one of the "Giant 25¢ reprint editions" from the beginning of the Bronze Age, and features the Atomic Knights saga "When the Earth Blacked Out", a story that reveals the perpetrator of World War III.

This riveting image from **Weird Mysteries** #4 (Apr 1953) was surely the inspiration for an Outer Limits episode broadcast more than a decade later

By Jon Signorelli and Erich Medenbach

10 Best Pre-Code Horror Comics of All Time!

Two collectors pick the best non-EC pre-code Horror books... with no apologies for the gore!

"No comic magazine shall use the word horror or terror in its title.... All scenes of horror, excessive bloodshed, gory or gruesome crimes... shall not be permitted. .. Scenes dealing with, or instruments associated with walking dead, or torture shall not be used." —**The Comics Code Authority, 1954**

most disgusting, objectionable (i.e., the coolest!) horror comic books ever produced.

competition for readers' dimes at the early titles was fierce, and a spirit of "one upmanship

horror comics in the effort to carve and/or maintain a niche in the

policy (or lack thereof) had drifted into deep water among many comic

ist could be deemed in poor taste by today's standards, let alone the

This was especially true of smaller publishers, who tried to catch up with the phenomenal success of the EC horror lineup

Things had gotten really extreme by 1952-53. Looking at the horror comics of this period leaves one with the sense that publishers knew the end was near, and went for broke! Many comics featured revolting cover images, which leered from titles that shouted "weird" "terror" "horror" and "fear" at readers, from places like crypts, vaults, shadows, tombs, darkness, and far out futures. Gruesome cover promises were kept by stories showcasing murder, decapitation, dismemberment, and innumerable other forms of torture and blood letting. Competition among publishers drove flesh-eating ghouls to consume human organs, fiends to sever limbs, mad doctors to re-animate the dead, and aliens to steal living brains for transplant into their own grotesque hulks … and all in comic books marketed to kids!

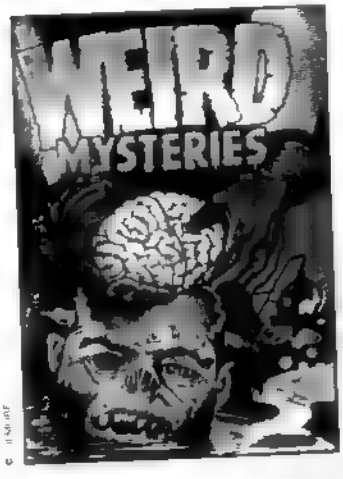
If the traditional ghost story was the wellspring from which these comics evolved, they became putrid pools far more lurid and violent than any narrative from the likes of Poe or Hawthorne! Horror comics had reached a dead end… and all that blood-letting ultimately drained the patience out of parent groups and legislators … who, in turn, pressured publishers and distributors to bring down the curtain on four color horror.

Were they deserving of their fate? Were they really in poor taste? Were they truly unfit for children? Were they deserving of censorship? These questions are complex and have been debated in numerous magazines, books, and collectors' circles for decades.

As for concrete answers… we'll postpone those (for the time being) to later inquiries and spare you from subjective conclusions, cultural rhetoric, and moral outrage. Instead, we invite true collectors to pull up close… and inhale the rancid reek of the ten absolute coolest pre-code books ever produced … and you'll notice a distinct lack of the sublime in our selections! In a field awash in questionable comic book images, these nominations represent "tidal waves" in a sea of comic book excesses.

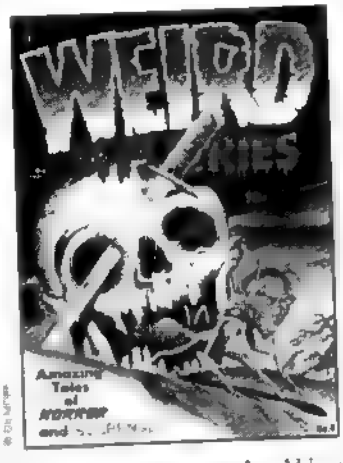
As cover collectors, what meets the reader's eye first is the aspect that weighed heaviest with us … but due consideration was also given to story elements, art, and other evaluative aspects (some too enigmatic to define) in our selection of the best pre-code horror comics.[1]

As a final note, we must address the purposeful omission of ECs from this list. Most collectors agree (and the authors concur) that EC Comics represent the best of their, and perhaps any, era. As such, they have received a tremendous amount of well deserved credit and almost universal acclaim over the years, resulting in massive and repeated media exposure. It is for this reason that they are not included here.



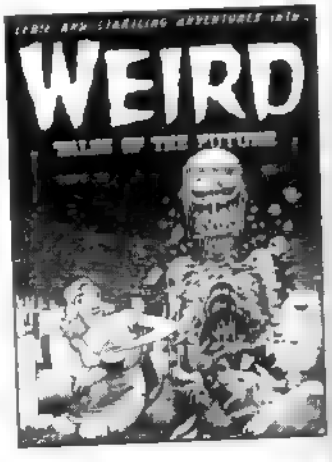
1. Weird Mysteries #5 (Gilmore, Jun 1953)

You'll notice this list is dominated by Bernard Bailey covers; Bailey was the pre-eminent horror cover artist ever. Period. Just a glance at this book's cover tells you why it's at the top of our list. Bailey's approach was consistently simple yet shocking, and this is perhaps the goriest of his many horror covers. One of the most popular books with pre-code collectors, its cover shows a surgeon's hands about to place a brain into a poorly cut hole in a Neanderthalian head… purple gloves, bare eye-sockets, electrodes, a vat of bubbling liquid … yeecchh! This book contains the Basil Wolverton masterpiece, "Swamp Monster" as well. Little more need be said regarding Wolverton's originality and unique place in comic book history. His scary stuff ranks with his best humor work, and "Swamp Monster" combined with this book's cover, make for a definitive pre-code horror comic book.



2. Weird Mysteries #4 (Gilmore, Apr 1953)

Another truly disturbing image by Bailey highlights the number two book on our list. This cover's fantastic scene is a surreal nightmare. A golden ant, with a human head, emerges from the mouth of a creepy skull, lying on the sand. A dagger pierces the skull. And an eerie black and red sky hangs over the old house and graveyard in the distance. It's a scene of traditional spooky elements, with an insane twist. This book also contains the classic story, "The Man Who Never Smiled" by Wolverton. These two books are somewhat difficult to come by, especially in any grade better than VG and have become a bit pricey due to the current popularity of horror comics.

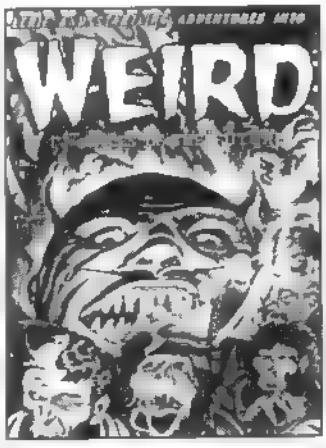


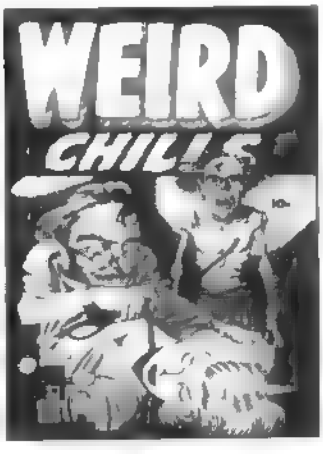
3. Weird Tales Of The Future #3 (Aragon, Sep 1952)

A book that blurs the line between horror and science fiction genres, it's included because of its classic Wolverton horror cover and stories. A huge ghoul blasts up from its grave, in sharp contrast to the beautiful woman kneeling next to a nearby headstone. Few covers attain "classic" status in the eyes of the majority of collectors, and it's a term frequently thrown about, but this one's it. Inside, three stories by the master Wolverton, are highlighted by his "Nightmare World" a brain-transplant story that rates with any pre-code horror ever produced. An expensive book compared to most horror and science fiction comics, due to its demand and scarcity, it's especially hard to get in grade.

4. Weird Tales Of The Future #7 (Aragon, May/June 1953)

Surprise! Another Bailey cover and Wolverton artwork, puts this book fourth. Its crackling cover shows a foul procession of hell-spawned creatures walking from the mouth of the devil himself amid the smoke and flames of Hell. The effort put into the cover by the artist is obvious. The books (and the others on this list) surely owes its scarcity, in part, to the shock which parents felt upon discovering it in their children's [illegible] undoubtedly countless copies destroyed by moms and pops. "The Brain Bats of Venus," Wolverton's most famous horror story, was reprinted in this issue in altered form. It's a great comic book.



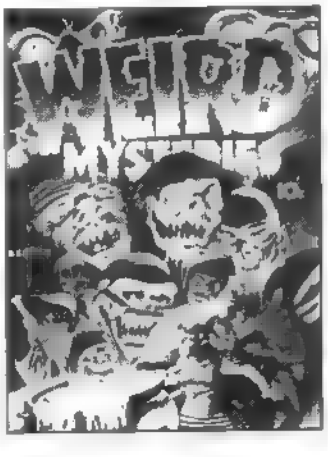


5. Weird Chills #1 (Key, Jul 1954)

Okay, need any more evidence that Bernard Bailey produced the scariest covers in all of pre-code horror? We didn't think so. This one shows how Bailey combined very dark backgrounds, stark monstrosities, splashes of color, and a distinct lack of bothersome text blurbs, with classic logos to produce standout work. His covers are decidedly not kid stuff. On this one, a psychopathic "doctor" prepares a pretty blonde for sacrifice, so that his disgusting zombie might live, by blood transfusion. The fiend's expressions (glee) with the zombie's ugly appearance and tube sunk in its chest, leave a lasting impression. This book also reprints "The Man Who Never Smiled" by Weirdwag Wolverton!

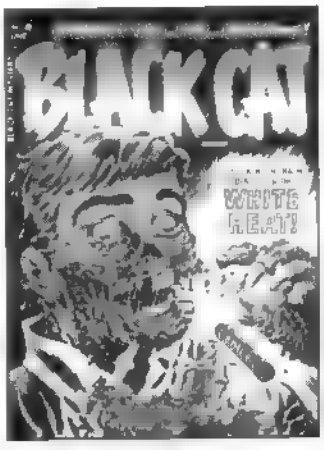
6. Weird Mysteries #2 (Gilmore, Dec 1952)

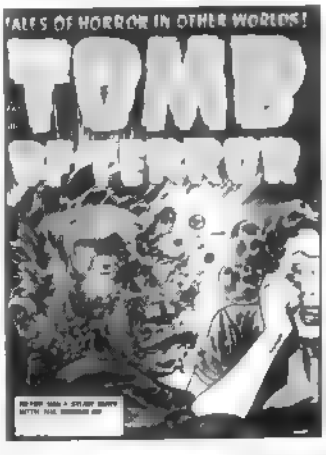
This issue features, once again, the one-two punch of Bailey and Wolverton. The cover is a montage of ghoulish faces swirling in a sea of dark colors, rising from a cauldron. The faces are uniquely Bailey; his horror art is as distinctive as legendary EC horror artists Graham Ingels, Jack Davis et al, and it's just a matter of time before his scary art gets the same acclaim as his Golden Age spectre work. Wolverton's famous story "Robot Woman" appeared in this issue also. We often wonder why Bill Gaines at EC didn't draft Wolverton for his books. Can you imagine Wolverton as a regular feature in *Tales From the Crypt*?



7. Black Cat #50 (Harvey, Jun 1954)

Our seventh and eighth spots belong to two famous comics from Harvey. This one's cover is pure gruesomeness. As pointed out in Mark Arnold's excellent article on Harvey horror comics in *CBM #29*, Harvey showcased top art talent like Rudy Palais and Bob Powell. But it's this book's cover that makes it the most memorable Harvey horror comic of them all. A bar of radium has disastrous consequences for its unfortunate handler, whose face literally melts off, with his hands! The cover is so graphic, you can almost hear the poor fella's dilemma... "What to do!" is an unforgettable cover.



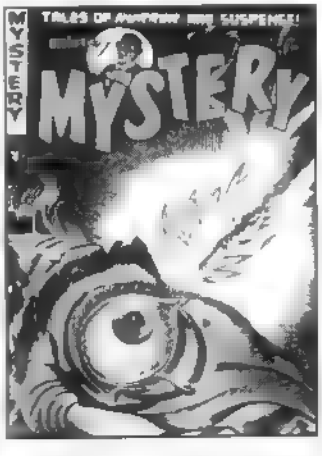


8. Tomb Of Terror #15 (Harvey, May 1954)

Break it up" as in the guy's head, that is. This comic makes a nice partner to *Black Cat* #50, with its pure, revolting shock value, classic logo design, and minor cover clutter. A few robotic parts do little to dull this cover's effect, as they seem to have been added in late, perhaps by some reluctant editor's choice. Although we suspect there are relatively more Harveys out there than the other books on this list, these last two seem to be hard for collectors to part with, and hence rarely turn up for sale.

9. Mister Mystery #12 (Aragon, Jul/Aug '53)

This cover is arguably the most memorable of the entire generation of pre-code horror comics. It's certainly the champion of the in your face-to-the-eye motif covers, drawn again by Bailey. The scarcity of this book is difficult to gauge, as it's rarely offered for sale. It's a high (low?) point of the entire genre.



Horrific Pricing

Based on their recent survey of collectors and dealers, Jon and Erich have listed what FN copies of their top ten horror books (and the five runners-up) will probably cost you in today's market. For reference, they've also provided the GD, FN, and NM price (shown in parentheses) as listed in the 1996 Overstreet Guide.

Weird Mysteries #5
($56-170-450)..... ..... $600

Weird Mysteries #4
($56-170-450)..... $600

Weird Tales of the Future #3
$84-253-675)..... .$500

Weird Tales of the Future #7
($50-150-400)..... $300

Weird Chi's #1
'$44-131-350)..... .$375

Weird Mysteries #9
($66-197-525)..... $600

Black Cat #50
$19-56-130) $250

Tomb of Terror #15
$21-64-150)..... $265

Mr Mystery #19
$75-225-600) $500

Mr Mystery #7
($75-225-600)..... $450

Weird Tales of the Future #8
$35-105-245) $400

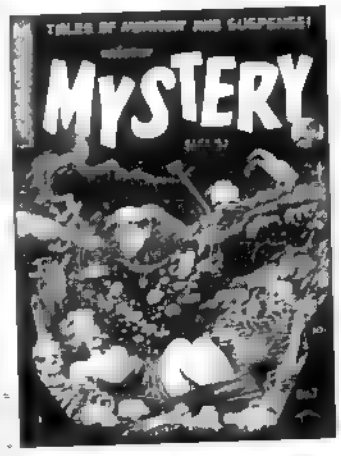
Out of the Shadows #8
($12-36-85)..... $175

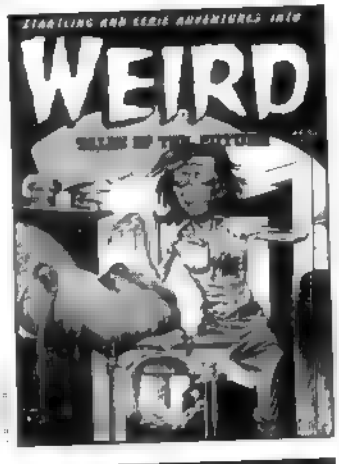
Horrific #3
($21-64-150)..... $250

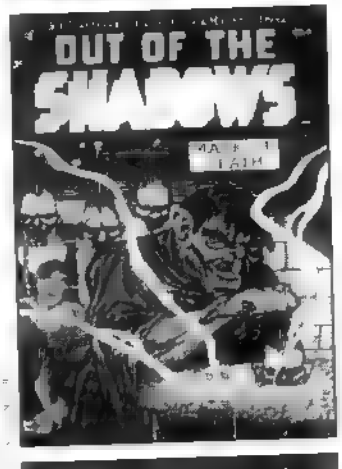
Beware #10
($40-120-300)..... .$300

Eerie #1
($188-562-1,500)..... $700

The Thing #19
($54-163-435)..... .$350







10. Mister Mystery #7 (Aragon, Sep 1952)

This book contains perhaps the top comic book horror story ever, "The Brain Bats of Venus" by Wolverton. We think it's his first non-Atlas horror work. (Does anyone know otherwise?) It marks Wolverton's first work for Aragon/ Gilmore, where he produced a string comic book stories that are in a class of their own. In short, this truly eerie story features Venusian, bat-like creatures which swoop down on their prey, drape their foulness over the victim's head, and commandeer all brain activity! This book also sports a better-than-average horror cover by Gilmore standby Mike Morteliaro, depicting a freakish hunchback burying a woman alive, in a mass grave. Gotta love it

Honorable Mention

Weird Tales Of The Future #8 (Aragon, Jul/Aug '53)

Sporting perhaps the grossest cover art Bernard Bailey ever produced, this issue marks the demise of a memorable title. It was published immediately following *Weird Mysteries* #5, suggesting the extreme which Aragon/Gilmore had reached with their books. Sheer audacity! This issue's cover leaves nothing to the imagination, save perhaps just how this creep's still mobile without his ticker! Anyway, he wants it back

Out Of The Shadows #8 (Standard, Dec 1952)

The best cover of the run, by Jack Katz, who must have been inspired on this one. It shows a creep in the process of adding to his collection of shrunken heads. Victims are decapitated and their heads dunked in chemicals and hung to dry, while the next victim watches. The cover art is light years ahead of most pre-code stuff. This comic is a bargain at *Guide*

Horrific #3 (Comic Media, Jan 1953)

The famous bullet-hole-in the head cover highlights a nice run of Don Heck covers

Beware #10 (Trojan, Jul 1954)

Frank Frazetta's only true horror cover, it's a beautifully

drawn scene of zombies ganging up on a beautiful girl. The more you look at this cover art, the better it gets.

Eerie #1 (Avon, Jan 1947)

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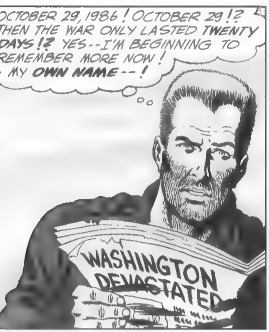

OCTOBER 29, 1986! OCTOBER 29!? THEN THE WAR ONLY LASTED TWENTY DAYS!? YES--I'M BEGINNING TO REMEMBER MORE NOW! MY OWN NAME--!
WASHINGTON DEVASTATED

World War III–the great atomic war–is over... and in its wake lies an Earth in ruins! Of plant life, there is none! Of animal life, only a small number of humans lingers on! There is no government, and the prevailing law is "might makes right!" In this critical time of Earth's history arises an organization determined to represent law and order and the forces of justice–to help right wrong and prevent evil! The proud name this group chooses for itself is... —The Atomic Knights!

Strange Schwartz Stories

A HISTORY OF THE ATOMIC KNIGHTS

BY LOU MOUGIN

The Atomic Knights were the things of Strange Schwartz Stories to come. Though they came about in Kennedy's time, they were products of the Ike era. They debuted in DC's *Strange Adventures* #117 (June 1960) and, like many series edited by Julie Schwartz, they didn't appear every issue. They managed 14 appearances by their swan song, #160 (January 1964). Three issues later, Schwartz would leave the title and Jack Schiff took the helm. He didn't pick up the option on the Knights.

All their stories were written by Schwartz's best scripter, John Broome, and drawn by one of his greatest artists, Murphy Anderson. In their four years, they managed to make one cover appearance. For all that, they've managed to stick in the fannish memory. The quality of their stories were top-notch for the time, but it may be something more.

The cover of *Strange Adventures* #117 (Jun 1960; FACING PAGE, LOWER LEFT) gives no hint of the exceptional and historic two-part Atomic Knights origin concealed in its pages.

The Knights' stories had a haunting quality to them, a sense that all might not be well in this most optimistic of times, that things might very well go to hell in a handbasket, and that the vaunted skyscrapers of our major cities might someday stand as high-rise tombstones of the American dream.

The furious patriotism of the '50s and early 60s was framed by a great horror: that, for the first time in history, the United States could be utterly obliterated by the weapons of a foreign power. Only the fact of Mutual Assured Destruction kept the atomic bombs from raining down—that, and the knowledge that if they were dropped, nothing would remain worth taking.

I was past the gush-wow stage when I encountered the Knights. They were being reprinted in the 1970 *Strange Adventures* Julie Schwartz had taken back for his own. Though I was mightily ticked off that my favorite strip, Deadman, was gone, I gave the Knights (and their bookmate, Adam Strange) a look-see.

They weren't half bad. And their message was charming, perhaps even uplifting. A great civilization, even on a planetary scale, might fall. But leave enough good men and women at the end of it, and, by golly, they'd roll up their sleeves and get to work building civilization anew.

Or perhaps they'd put on armor to do it.

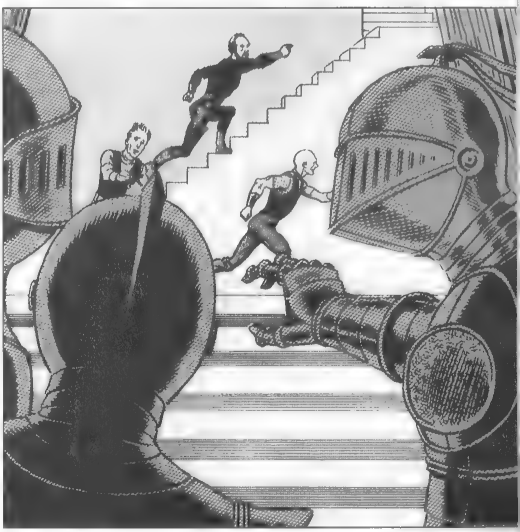
Anyway, *SA* #117 (after Infantino's cover-featured "Challenge of the Gorilla Genius") gave us "The Rise of the Atomic Knights," featuring a splash page with five characters in medieval armor ramming a fortress's wooden door with a huge log while five guards with ray-guns sniped uselessly at them from the walls above. The leader of the group exclaimed, "Forward, Atomic Knights—for victory and justice!" And Broome's opening caption (SEE FACING PAGE) set the stage.

The story commenced with an amnesiac soldier in a green uniform and a couple of days' worth of beard… fleeing a mob in the ruins of a city. After finding a hiding place, the soldier's memory began to return: he was one Gardner Grayle, and had in his back pocket a newspaper clipping that proclaimed him "Mr. Average Atomic-Warrior". "The war... the terrible atomic war... that destroyed everything! But how long ago was that?" A newspaper in a bombed-out house told him: "October 29, 1986! October 29!? Then the war only lasted 20 days!?"

As far as a nuclear exchange would go, that was a pretty long war. Grayle, whose first name was taken from Gardner Fox, realized the mob had been chasing him to get food packs he had stashed in his clothing. He further remembered that a radio broadcast had said the "Super-H" bomb explosions had literally changed the shape of continents. Some "Anti-H" pills had protected him, and presumably the rest of the survivors, from radiation disease.

Looking back at these pages from a 1997 perspective, one is struck by one thing: how orderly everything looks in Anderson's depiction of the post-holocaust. The walls of houses and building may be broken down, but there's no garbage piling up, no debris in the street, no charnel scenes. The Comics Code wouldn't have allowed the latter, anyway. But the 1986 World War was apparently a pretty tidy affair. Well, maybe they used a lot of neutron bombs. That would keep the neighborhood looking nice, at least.

Anyway, Grayle comes upon the ruins of a museum, in which a guy is being attacked by another mob. Since it's a pretty small mob, he joins in with his dukes and they beat away the miscreants. While punching, they exchange dialogue, and Grayle learns his newfound friend is Douglas Herald, a schoolteacher. Herald explains



later that the hoods were attacking him to try and get a can of food from him. Said can looks like a tin of sardines, so the mob must have been pretty desperate.

"This museum used to be our town supply–until it was raided and cleaned out by the Black Baron's men! No one knows his real name! But he runs this town with an iron hand! If you want to eat, you have to lick his boots!" And Herald pointed to the yellow-and-green fortress in the distance which was the Black Baron's command post. The Baron himself was a mustached, black-costumed baddie with a "B" symbol on his chest who hoarded food and ruled the area with Ragun law. ("Raguns" is the spelling of Raygun in Fox's futuristic epic.)

At that point, Grayle and Herald had to jump

for cover, since somebody had thrown an R-grenade (apparently a neutron bomb about the size of a beer can) into the museum. They ducked behind a display of ancient armor. The grenade's rays should have killed them outright. But, miraculously, both our heroes found themselves very much alive after the bombardment.

Grayle and Herald stood before the armor suits, thinking. "...what saved us must have been the metal in these ancient suits of armor! They stopped–neutralized–the deadly rays!" said Grayle. "It could be that through the centuries this metal has hardened into a peculiar molecular structure!" opined Herald.

"If the armor protects against R-grenades, it will protect against Raguns too! And that means we now have a way of fighting the Black Baron!"

"By Sol!" exclaimed Herald. "You're right, Gardner! We do!"

And they did.

The next step was to assemble the townspeople, explain the situation, and get volunteers to fill the six suits of armor. Since one suit was tailored for an awfully short soldier or a boy, they ruled that one out. Three other recruits were found. Two farm boys, Wayne and Hollis Hobard, were identical twins. They were the spitting image of two other identical twins Murphy had drawn in a Buck Rogers newspaper sequence some time before. Murphy admitted that this was done because it was easier to draw two characters who looked like each other.

The third, Bryndon Smith, was a scientist who proved his worth by finding a food can with a metal detector of his own design. A metal detector was a pretty exotic gadget in 1960, though it wouldn't have been in our 1986. Anyway, Bryndon Smith put the thing together on his own, so it doesn't take away from his ingenuity.

Finally, there was Marlene Herald, a good-looking blonde, who shyly said, "Hello... Gardner...", to which Gardner did an aw-shucks grin and said nothing. She was not formally proposed as a candidate. The boys got to work.

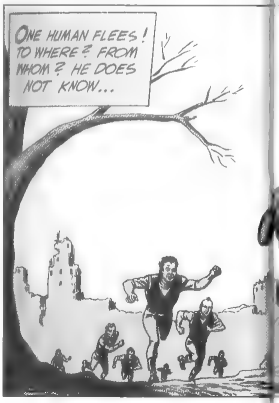
Some time later, the Black Baron and a guard beheld several strange figures approaching their fortress. Gardner Grayle, safely ensconced in his metal suit, gave the Baron one last chance to open his doors and distribute the food equally among the community. He didn't take it. The Knights grabbed their battering-ram log, shrugged off the blasts of the guards' Raguns, and crashed inside.

Grayle, confronting the Baron in his castle, was rescued by somebody in the compact-sized armor. The Baron was busted. The food supplies were distributed. And the sixth Knight, the small one, was unmasked as Marlene Herald. "Will you forgive me, Gardner? I couldn't resist–" Gardner kissed her, and then allowed, "Someday I'd like to try that without the armor!" Marlene blushed. In the real 1986, she'd probably have sued him for sexual harrassment.

The sextet of heroes held council soon afterward, and adopted the name of the Atomic Knights. "There aren't any more police–there isn't any government so far as we know!... Someone has to represent law and order and the forces of justice in these terrible times!" said Grayle. "And it looks like the job is ours!"

WE WERE RIGHT BEHIND THE ARMOR WHEN THE GRENADE BLASTED OFF--!
YES! IT COULD BE THAT THROUGH THE CENTURIES THIS METAL HAS HARDENED INTO A PECULIAR MOLECULAR STRUCTURE...

Bryndon Smith cut in with a revelation: the armor, he said, was not infallible. It would resist Ragun fire or radiation bombardment for a limited time, or up to a limited level. After that... the occupant was Spam in a can. Grayle replied that they'd just have to take that into account as another risk. Marlene, watching Grayle rah-



nothing the rest, thought to her girlish self: "A strange feeling has come over me! Have I—fallen in love with Gardner Grayle?"

And so ended the first Atomic Knights story.

Now, granted, this one is easy to criticize from our perspective. In the post-space, post-womens' lib, post-U.S.S.R., post-integration world, this plays as more than a little corny. Even the all-white composition of the Knights would be called into question today.

But this is also pre-Alan Moore, pre-Neil Gaiman, and pre-Art Spiegleman world. The Atomic Knights, though written by the liberal John Broome, were the products of a pre-'60's-liberal age, and reflected their time. Kids' entertainment was carefully sanitized back then, and a grimmer, grittier Atomic Knights rampaging through a Marshal Law-style landscape would never have been allowed. It wouldn't even have sold.

Reading it, I can look past the B-movie cliches and get down to the underlying message: that civilization can, and will, rise from the ashes, because it is a thing that Mankind cannot live without for long. Also, that the benefits of limited government and some social organization far outweigh its detriment. Make of that what you will.

I didn't mind the Atomic Knights

Schwartz never treated the Knights like he did Adam Strange in *Mystery In Space*. Apparently—and he may have been right about it—he thought that the oddball, whiz-bang covers of oil demons jumping out of drilling rigs to attack humans, or pterodactyls hovering over the White House, or giant flying gorillas snagging jet fighter planes would sell more comics than the repetitive six Knights trudging through the ruins of post-nuke America. The Atomic Knights appeared in every third issue after #117 up through #156. Their next shot, in #160, was the end.

In *SA* #120 (September 1960), the Atomic Knights got their own transportation: an atomic-powered hot rod put together by Bryndon. They got a note requesting help, signed "A Band of Humans", and took off for Salt Lake to fight a giant, radioactive, salt-crystal monster. (They whupped it.) In #123 they took on "The Cavemen of New York", amidst the eerie scenery of a busted-down-in-the-middle George Washington Bridge and great ships sunk in New York Harbor. In #126 it was off to L.A. in gliders, where they battled giant radiation creatures that turned out to be hallucinations. (Perfect for L.A.) In #129, Bryndon unveiled his latest gadget, a television set (by this time, he was beginning to seem like Clyde Crashcup, inventing things that had been around for a long time already), by which they found the newly-risen isle of Atlantis. Aquaman wasn't around.

But a new villain was—Khagan, Emperor of Atlantis, who was intent on bringing the world under Atlantean control. Since Atlantis still had vegetation, the Knights managed to make it back home with seeds and vegetables with which to make their world fertile again. Khagan and his legions followed, interrupting a Thanksgiving Day feast (#132). Some of the Atlanteans got nabbed, but Khagan was still at large.

The Knights finally had what every hero secretly wants: a recurring villain. Khagan returned in the next two Atomic Knights tales (*SA* #135, 138). The last one featured the two giant mutant Dalmatians, whom the Knights rode into battle, finally capturing Khagan. Pongo and Perdita would have been proud.

The post-nuke Paladins handled "The Menace of the Metal Raiders" in #141. Then, in their next adventure, they finally got a cover shot (*SA* #144). Better yet, they found out who had really started World War III. It was a bunch of mole people from underground, seeking ground level "Lebensraum". That took it off the hands of any nation on our Earth, and provided rationale for the future roundup and detention of mole people, should they ever appear here.

SA #147 featured an element dear to John Broome's heart: Dixieland jazz. They were ostensibly after medical supplies, but it gave Broome a chance to reveal the Hobard brothers as closet jazz fans. But the cruel King of New Orleans had forbidden jazz to be played in his realm. In a precursor to Yellow Submarine, the Atomic Knights penetrated the Jazz Museum of New Orleans, formed an impromptu band, and marched to the rescue, playing "When the Saints Came Marching In." The townspeople were aroused by the music, rose up, and overthrew the King and his blue meanies. The Knights also got the medical supplies, in case you're wondering.

Through all of this, the level of civilization was growing. Broome and Anderson were at pains to show the people of this new America getting back to rural-roots activity, planting and harvesting crops, yattering at the neighbors as if the only effects of World War III was to turn the clock back to the 1920s. One can imagine Ray Bradbury being happy in such a milieu.

Mankind was getting it back together.

The Knights played four more gigs, in #150, 153, 156, and 160. Issue #150 was a riff on Day of the Triffids, as giant motile plants attacked humans. The plants were domesticated and found new jobs in the service economy, as waiters

and such. In #153 they went to Detroit, fought the fascist Blue Belts, and were rewarded with a new car that ran on motile plant juice. *SA* #156 saw them back in New Orleans, saving a woman from being burnt as a witch, and fighting radiation creatures. The creatures weren't illusions, since it wasn't set in L.A. The Blue Belts returned in #160 (January 1964) and got beaten again; in this one Marlene had to dress as a Tom Sawyerish boy and infiltrate a kid gang, which she did successfully. The last panel advised us to "Watch for another exciting Atomic Knights adventure in a forthcoming issue of *Strange Adventures*!"

That forthcoming issue turned out to be #217, March/April 1969... quite a wait, even for a devoted fan. *SA* #163 was Schwartz's last issue, and he didn't use another Atomic Knights story. He moved on to Batman and Detective, with Jack Schiff and George Kashdan getting *Strange Adventures*.

But Schwartz came back, after Deadman was cancelled and *SA* was turned into a reprint book. He took Adam Strange from *Mystery In Space* and the Atomic Knights from earlier issues and reprinted them both back-to-back in the new *Strange Adventures*. It was cheap to produce, and it was enough of a hit to keep the book going.

The Atomic Knights gained a new audience, one which, perhaps, hadn't even been reading comics when the original series came out. Murphy Anderson even drew a new Knights cover for issue #223. Since sales were higher on issues that had a generic sci-fi cover, very often new covers were drawn that depicted scenes from an Atomic Knights story...without the Knights. But at least they were back, until all fourteen stories had been reprinted. They were then replaced by other features.

But that wasn't the end.

By the '70s, a new batch of comics fans-turned-writers had arrived at DC. One of them, Cary Bates, was writing a short-lived series called Hercules Unbound, set in a post-holocaust world. In issue #10 (April/May 1977), Herc and crew encountered a pair of gigantic Dalmatians. And, a few panels later, the Atomic Knights followed in suit. (In metal suits, to be exact.) They had the usual confused-hero battle with Hercules, ended up teaming with him, tied the whole mess in with some plot strands from Omac, and guest-starred through the next issue.

Unfortunately, Bryndon Smith died in those two issues, consumed by an energy-being.

But that wasn't the end.

In *DC Comics Presents* #57 (May 1983), Superman was cover-billed as teaming up with the Atomic Knights. Hercules was around too, for good measure. But it turned out that Superman had just been sucked into an illusion. As he pointed out, "You talk as though your war was totally destructive... yet you seem to be doing fine--with plenty of goods and equipment to rebuild with! And what about radiation? Debilitating and fatal diseases would ravage mankind in the years after a nuclear war--but Durvale (the Knights' town) doesn't even have a hospital!"

Writers Gary Cohn and Dan Mishkin revealed that all the Atomic Knights stories were the fantasies of Gardner Grayle, who had been hooked into a sensory deprivation tank and fed a computer simulation of a "post-nuke" environment for research purposes. Superman freed Grayle, who later exclaimed, "This whole project was misguided from the start--trying to figure out how to live in a post-holocaust world... how to keep making war in it!" Then he went off and became a superhero called The Atomic Knight, in a team called the Forgotten Heroes.

So... the Atomic Knights' fourteen stories in *Strange Adventures* were only a fantasy?

Feh.

So, too, was this story a fantasy! And if a fantasy is "real" someplace... then so can a fantasy of a fantasy be "real" someplace else!

Gardner Grayle of *DC Comics Presents* may think he dreamed the whole thing up. But somewhere, in some continuum, the Gardner Grayle of *Strange Adventures* is still helping his mates in the Atomic Knights to rebuild the world.

I believe Bryndon Smith is still there, too. And that Gardner finally married Marlene.

And if the revisionists don't like it...that's just tough! ■

Remembering *Jack Abel*

by Steven Fears

One of the definitions of an artist, in *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, is "one who professes and practices an imaginative art." A definition of the word, craftsman, is "a workman who practices a trade or handicraft." And then there is the definition for friend, "one attached to another by affection or esteem." Jack Abel was all of those and more. He was born on July 15, 1927, but left us on March 6, 1996, after suffering a heart attack while working as a proof reader in the Marvel offices. CPR was administered by an editor, Kelly Corvese, but it was too late. Jack was 68.

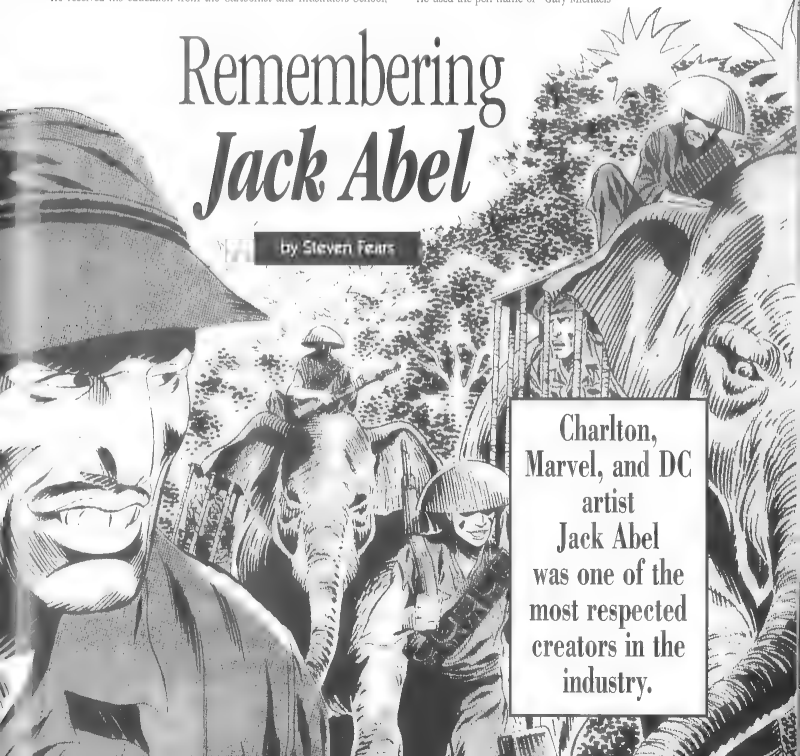
Jack was a member of a group of comic professionals that is very exclusive but keeps getting smaller. He was a part of the artists and writers who have been around since the early '50s. He was a mainstay in the industry. Always reliable, always there, and always working. Today's artists can learn many lessons from him in the areas of creativity, consistency, and timeliness.

He received his education from the Cartoonist and Illustrators School, 1948 to 1951. His first job was as an assistant to Rocco Mastroserio. Later, when he did work for Charlton Comics, they collaborated.

According to Jerry Bails' *Who's Who of American Comic Books*, there is a list of credits two-arm's length long! His career began in the early 1950s and continued until his death on March, 1996. He worked for many companies during the years, including Charlton, American Comics Group (ACG), DC, Fawcett, Fiction House, Hillman, Gold Key, Seaboard/Atlas, and others... finishing his career at Marvel.

Robert Kanigher once said that he rode Jack Abel hard for a year, finally turning him into a penciler. He worked with Bob Forgione for a while, early in his career, eventually becoming a penciler and inker in his own right. His approach changed during the 1960s, constantly improving and culminated into a very distinctive look. He developed a very clean and smooth penciling and inking style.

He used the pen name of "Gary Michaels"



Charlton, Marvel, and DC artist Jack Abel was one of the most respected creators in the industry.

(the name of his son) while inking "Adam Austin" (Gene Colan) at Marvel on "Iron Man" for *Tales of Suspense*. He was on staff with Marvel for the last ten or so years as an inker and later (because of health reasons) as a proofreader. Peter David had a lot to say about him in his column for *Comics Buyer's Guide*, #1167, March 29, 1996, and later in this article as a tribute.

STAR SPANGLED WAR STORIES
BOOT HILL FOR BAKER!
ALONE WITH THE ENEMY! C'MON, BOOTS — WE'LL NEVER GRADUATE MUCKING THE DIRT HERE!
"AND WE GOT USED TO BEING CALLED
KIKER, GOOMER, BOOTS!
RUN 'EM OVER, BOOTS!
KNOCK 'EM DOWN, BOOTS!
BOOTS!

"Boot Hill for Baker" from **Star Spangled War Stories** #81 (May 1959). Pencils and inks by Jack Abel.

Everybody liked Jack, old and new alike. He was well respected by many and touched the lives of those with whom he worked or knew. He was a dedicated professional and helped advance comics into a medium to be enjoyed by many. I became a fan of his over the years, growing up and reading the DC war comics. He was always there, month after month. You could count on seeing his beautiful art on a regular basis.

As fans, we will truly mourn his passing. He gave of himself and enriched our lives through his art. Those that knew him and worked with him over the years feel the loss and miss him. He was a good man. He is survived by his wife Adele, his son Gary, his daughter Randi, and his granddaughter Kelly.

Some very nice people have taken their time to say some things about Jack Abel.

Joe Kubert

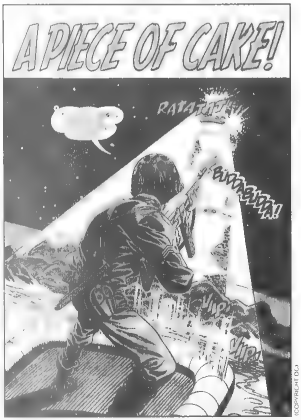
(artist, writer, editor, publisher, Director of the Joe Kubert School)

"Between the late 1950s and the early 1960s and into the 1970s, Jack and I worked for Bob Kanigher (editor/writer). When I left DC to do 'Tales of the Green Berets' for syndication. Jack inked a couple of weeks of the strip over my pencils. Our relationship, like so many others maintained during my time, was not really social. That is, we didn't go out (individually or familywise), but, rather, we saw each other whenever we ran into one another at the offices.

"Mostly all free-lance people worked at home. We'd come into the city to either pick up a script (from the editor, not the writer), or to deliver the job. Sometimes, to bring a job in after pencils (for corrections from the editor) or to be lettered. Seeing the other artists, or writers, was hit-or-miss. I guess, maybe, the editor arranged to see artists/writers on specific days of the week, so's not to break up too many 'work days.'

"Anyhow, that's when Jack and I would see each other and

"A Piece of Cake" from Our Army At War #66 (Jan 1958). Pencils by Bob Forgione, inks by Jack Abel.



talk about things–what we were doing–the next job, etc.

Jack had a wonderful sense of humor. Kind of self-deprecating. By that, I mean he never made anyone else the brunt of a joke. I never remember him ever putting someone else down. He'd describe how he screwed up–or made a mistake, an error in judgment. Very rarely poking fun at another individual and never, if that individual was having a tough time. Jack was kind-hearted and easy-going. At least, from my vantage point, and the (limited) experience I had with him.

He seemed to be content (if not happy) up at Marvel. We reminisced whenever I got up there–at Marvel–and that was the impression I came away with.

He was a good guy–a good artist–dependable, and honest. That's the Jack Abel I knew."

Peter David (writer)

"The thing that I remember most distinctly about Jack was just the steadiness of his presence: that he was always there; that he was sort of a connection to the earlier days of Marvel. There are several people who fall into that category: John Romita, Sr. for example, but there have been fewer and fewer of those folks as time goes on, and with John Romita, Sr.'s retirement, Jack was the last of the in-office connections to Marvel's old days. On that basis, he had a tremendous amount of respect given him by all of the folks at Marvel.

"Nowadays, in our society, the young tend to look down upon the old; to look down their noses at them; to have the attitude of 'get out of the way, Old Man, I'm here, now, and I'm going to show you how it's done', and that was never the case at Marvel particularly in regards to Jack Abel.

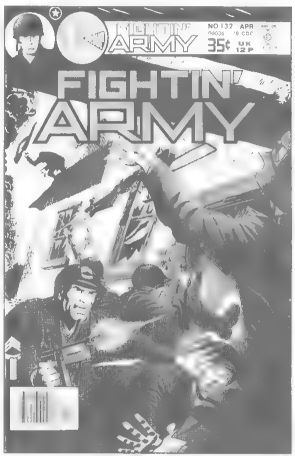
"The Marvel staff has always had tremendous respect and admiration for those who went before them, and perceives them as one wishes that all the young people perceive the elderly, namely as sources of wisdom and resources that they can utilize in a variety of ways. And that's how many people felt about Jack: he was an incarnation of what Marvel was, and, hopefully, would continue to be, and with his passing, it is as if a pillar collapsed. It's not the kind of thing that the average fan is aware of or going to know anything about; they don't know Jack Abel from a hole in the ground. To the people at Marvel, Jack Abel really stood for something; he stood for something really great, and it is a sad thing that he is gone."

Steve Mitchell (artist)

"I first met Jack when I was a fan, back in the '60s. DC Comics used to have a tour on Thursdays, after lunch. The tour started whenever the guy on 'tour duty' got back from lunch. I grew up in New York City, and I was a huge fanboy. When I found out that you could hang out at the place that makes comic books, I used to try and do that whenever possible during the summer, on school holidays, I was like around ten or eleven at the time, maybe twelve, and I met Len Wein, and Marv Wolfman and Mark Hannerfeld and a few other guys who were involved in what was then organized fandom. Ultimately, those guys became pros.

"Anyway, I met Jack one day at the DC offices, and I was sort of a pushy fan at the time, and I said, 'Oh, Mr. Abel, can I have a sketch?' and he drew me a little head of Lt. Hunter. That's when I first met Jack.

"I got to know Jack when he started to rent space at Continuity Associates. It was Neal Adams' studio started with Dick Giordano, and ultimately became the home for a cross between wayward kids and pros. I was Giordano's assistant at the time, and so, every once in a while, when I wanted a change of pace, I would go back to Jack's office and give him a hard time.



Fightin' Army #132 (Apr 1978). Cover by Jack Abel.

Jack was amazing. He used to come in every day, and he used to ink like a machine, not machine-like, but he had to do eighteen panels a day. He didn't have any backer help; he had nobody helping him with clean-up or filling in blacks or any of that stuff. He was amazing!

"My impression of Jack, when I met him, was that he was affable, easy-going, and extremely opinionated. Jack had an opinion about everything, and oftentimes those opinions were extremely entertaining, and sometimes irritating, but always articulate. Jack was intelligent, articulate, and an incredibly passionate baseball fan. He was also a movie fan–another passion we shared. Basically, he was a really good guy.

"During the war book days at DC, Kanigher was his main client. He both penciled and inked his work. I think that he became an inker out of necessity. When the war books started to fade, Jack started to ink for a living. Jack always had a Gold Key job in the house. He always had some eight-page, Gold Key, *Twilight Zone, Boris Karloff* job. When there was some down time, he could pencil and ink that for Gold Key.

"A little Jack Abel comedy sidebar: when I was a kid, I used to call Charlton Comics, 'Carlton' Comics because I thought the 'h' was silent. I mentioned that to Jack once, and he

I GREW UP STUDYING JACK ABEL'S WORK. WHERE ELSE WOULD ONE LEARN TO INK TREES!
THAT PEN SCRATCHING IS DRIVING ME INSANE!
AT DC IN 1971, I FIRST MET JACK AND LEARNED ABOUT COMPOSITION.
ROSS ANDRU IS A MASTER OF CHAOS! STUPID KID!
WHY AREN'T YOU WORKING?
VALLEY STREAM, N.Y., THE WALLACE WOOD STUDIO AND JACK GAVE ME MY FIRST BIG BREAKS. AND FROM HIM TOO, DURING LUNCHES SERVED BY THE UGLY SISTERS, I BEGAN TO LEARN ABOUT WOMEN.
FAT LEGS
STUPID KID.
WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT LEGS?
WITH JACK, WOODY AND SYD SHORES FREQUENTLY WAXING NOSTALGIC, I LEARNED MUCH ABOUT THE LEGENDS OF THE "GOLDEN AGE."
KANIGHER ALWAYS CALLED ME "ISABEL". BOB FORGIONE HAD ELASTIC ELBOWS.
AL WILLIAMSON WOULD SAY "HUBBAHUBBA, WOO WOO" WHEN HE SAW A LOOKER.
I GOTTA CALL JOHN VERPOOTEN.
FROM JACK ONE COULD ALWAYS LEARN A LESSON IN NAIVE INNOCENCE.
"...GHOULOVE SEEN THE AWFUL RAGS THAT TV ACTOR WAS WEARING..."
UH, JACK--I KNAY!
FROM JACK'S FAMOUS CARD GAMES AT YALTA WITH FDR, STALIN AND CHURCHILL I LEARNED THE LESSON OF GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP.
YOUR BIG ELEANOR
IF YOU COULD STAND UP, I'D KNOCK YOU DOWN
WHEN WOODY CLOSED HIS STUDIO JACK AND I MOVED ON TO CONTINUITY ASSOCIATES. THERE I LEARNED PATIENCE FROM JACK.
SAM BECKINPAH! SAMDY GOMAN! GUT RIP!
ROCCO MASTROSERIO'S DEATH MASK! INGABORG CHAYKIN! GLENN MILLER!
SHLISNKAS! FAT LEGS! SUCCA DI FRUTTA!
THE THREE MESQUITEERS! HOFFA! MAX TERHUNE!
STUPID KIDS.
DURING LUNCHES AT "KENAYS" (FOR FINE FOOD, GEORGE WASHINGTON INEXPLICABLY, YOUR WAITRESS, I LEARNED TABLE ETIQUETTE.
PLEASE PASS THE MUSTARD, DEAH.
WHEN JACK WENT ON STAFF AT MARVEL, I LEARNED ABOUT DEDICATION.
WHERE ARE THE FREELANCE CHECKS ALREADY?
SHH!!
ZZZZ-ZZZZ
BUT ALL DOWN THE 25 YEARS I KNEW JACK, I GUESS THE GREATEST THING HE HELPED ME LEARN WAS HOW TO LOVE YOUR FRIENDS.
OW!
STUPID KID.
WE ALL LOVE YOU, JACK.

ought it was pretty amusing so, more often than not, we used to refer to Charlton as 'Carlton.'

"I got along with Jack famously. Jack and I agreed on a lot of stuff, and we agreed to disagree on a lot of stuff. He was cranky when we played cards. He was the crankiest loser I had ever known (ha, ha!), and he used to get peeved at a number of us because he knew how to play cards and when somebody played their hand badly and still won, he'd get really steamed about it. But that sort of contributed to basically what was so endearing about Jack. He was one of the crankiest guys I knew but always in a very warm and affectionate way. He was a tremendous curmudgeon, and I say that with nothing but the greatest respect!

"There was a coffee shop right downstairs from where Continuity was, and we would eat lunch there two or three times a week. There was a waitress, and I don't know if it was Jack or me or Alan Kupperberg, but she was obviously someone's grandmother, and reminded us of George Washington. She would always come to the table to ask for the mustard or ketchup to refill and would always say, 'Can I have the mustahd, de-ah?' For some reason, that really cracked Jack up. Whenever she'd walk by, more often than not, he would say, 'Can I have the mustahd, de-ah?' That became one of those goofy things that you tend to remember someone by.

"I liked the way Jack inked. He had a really accomplished line. His work was very linear. It was very clearly a line art style, very crisp, very clean, yet it wasn't mechanical; it was always organic. A lot of times he had to ink guys who used to pencil in tone, like Curt Swan and Gene Colan. They were tonal and very gray. He had to make a lot of choices and do a lot of interpretation, and I think that he did that very successfully. I look back on that stuff with a lot of fondness.

"Jack was a very accomplished comic book craftsman. I think that he would be happy to be thought of in those terms. In the old days, comics were a cheap form of entertainment. They had to come out on time, periodically. They weren't an art form the way that they are today; they weren't artful in the way that they are today. The thing that I liked about older comics is that they had a level of craft that they don't have today. That craft basically originated from a pragmatism; it was very important in getting the books out every month. Sol Harrison used to refer to the comics as 'magazines.'

"In the old days, the pros used to think of themselves as commercial artists and comics were the bottom rung of the commercial art field. Back then the guys used to wear ties and slacks and jackets and carry their work in attaché cases. There was this tip of the hat to the business world. Jack was one of those guys; he wore slacks; he wore a sports jacket; he always made a good appearance. Jack was a very solid craftsman, and he always made his deadlines. Comics were his employment, and he always did his job. Jack was a major contributor to DC and later to Marvel with others in between.

"We're here because of all the 'Jack Abels.' He wasn't unsung, but he was underappreciated. A lot of us learned a lot of fundamental lessons at Jack's knees, so to speak, about craft and professionalism. He was a terrific comic book artist; he was a talented comic book artist; and he was a guy who affected all of us. Anybody who met Jack, liked Jack. Anybody who worked with Jack, respected Jack."

"Ten Things I Learned From Jack Abel" by Alan Kupperberg.

AN ORPHAN. A GAMBLER. A WOMAN AS HAUNTINGLY BEAUTIFUL AS SHE IS DEADLY. WHEN A MAN MEETS ONLY AS--
Cinnamon
AND SHE HAS HATED HIM SINCE SHE WAS SEVEN YEARS OLD THAT NIGHT
CINNAMON
WRITTEN BY ALAN KUPPERBERG
PENCILS BY JACK ABEL
INKS BY VINCENT COLLETTA
LETTERS BY JERRY SHEVA
COLORS BY GLEN KEWMAN
EDITOR
DAMMIT!
WANTED TO CONFRONT HIM--TEN WHO CALLS HIMSELF ANNIE OAKLEY UNABLE--EVEN WHEN
FORGET HIM
OH, THE E... LES!

Alan Kupperberg (artist)

"I first met Jack at DC Comics when I went to work there in 1971 as an assistant production manager. Jack had come in, and I was a nervy kid and told him how much I liked his stuff. I'd talk about artists that I didn't like, for instance, or wasn't smart enough to like, being young and stupid; he set me straight!

"Jack was one of the nicest guys I ever met. He put up with the kid's nonsense; he didn't act all superior or disdainful of a

"Cinnamon" splash page from Weird Western Tales #48 (Sep/Oct 1978). Pencils by Jack Abel.

young punk (heh, heh). Maybe, it was presumption on my part, but I really felt it was almost immediately a relationship between equals.

"He gave me one of my first art jobs. He got an assignment for a thing called *Grin Magazine*; it was a movie parody of "The Godfather" called "The Godmother." He had me pencil with them: a *Twilight Zone* job.

"In a business where a lot of people are incredibly self-centered, and some of them are sharks, he wasn't one of them. He was very pure and guileless."

Featuring CAPT. HUNTER
THE LONG HUNT FOR HIS MISSING TWIN SHOT DOWN SOMEWHERE OVER VIET NAM LED EX-GREEN BERET CAPTAIN HUNTER INTO A CONG TRAP. TRUSSED UP LIKE CHRISTMAS TURKEY, SLUNG INTO A CAGE ON AN ELEPHANT'S BACK... MOVING UP THE JUNGLE PATHS OF THE HO CHI MINH TRAIL... AND WAITING FOR HIM AT THE END OF THE LINE WAS A RIGGED...
TRIAL BY FURY!
NO ONE CAN SAVE YOU OR THE OTHER PRISONERS, YANKEE SPY! YOUR SCOUT PLANES CANNOT FIND US IN THE DENSE JUNGLE COVER! ALL PEOPLE IN THE REGION ARE FRIENDLY TO US! YOUR... DOOM IS SEALED!
SAVE IT, CHARLIE! SO FAR THE ROPE'S AROUND MY ARMS NOT MY NECK!

"Trial by Fury" splash from **Our Fighting Forces #106** (Mar/Apr 1967), pencils and inks by Jack Abel.

it for him. Then he asked me if I could letter, and I did. He had a studio space, at that time, at the Wallace Wood Studio, Valley Stream, Long Island, New York. Also, in the studio at that time, was Syd Shores. Woody saw me lettering that stuff and asked me to letter his comic strips, 'Sally Forth' and 'Cannon,' for the Overseas Weekly. Then a week later, he asked me if I'd like to start helping him pencil it. Then the next week, he asked me if I'd like to start writing it for him. So, next to Jack, I got connected to a guy who was more of a mentor and that was Wally Wood.

"I became more aware of Jack's work, not from the DC war stuff, but through his inking of Curt Swan's Superman. He did some stuff for *Scholastic Magazine*. He also was doing work for Gold Key in between DC and Marvel. He helped to get me a job

Russ Heath (artist)

"We met an awfully long time ago. We were acquaintances for a long time. I remember him more from the years at Continuity. He had one of the nicest dispositions of anyone I had ever known.

'I remember one story. Jack was upset over something. I asked him what was wrong and he said, 'I'm not sure if I'm very ill or something.'

"I said, 'What's your problem?' And he said that he had to go to the bathroom all of the time.

"So I said, 'By the way, how many cups of coffee do you drink?' It seemed like he always had a cup of coffee in his hand.

"He said, 'About nine.'

"I said, 'nine cups… that's the formula for Draino!'

"He said, 'Gee, there may be something in that.'

"A couple of weeks later, he came running up to me and said, 'You saved my life!' He was very jubilant. The coffee was the problem.

He was steady. He was there at the same time every day and left at the same time. He was just one of those people who came in and sat down and worked until it was time to go home."

Rick Parker (artist)

"I knew Jack was well liked, and I always thought that he was a great guy who had many friends. After he died, it seems that everybody just rallied around.

"I was working in the Marvel Bullpen, in the late '70s, when Jack Abel came there from DC. He came to do art corrections at the time. My first impression of him was that he was a very easy going, likable, intelligent guy with a lot of experience in comics so that we all looked up to him.

"He was a great story teller. He had grown up during the Depression and lived in New York City so it was always interesting to listen to his stories. Everyone thinks of him as being very knowledgeable about baseball, but he knew a lot of other stuff too. He didn't have a college education, rather, he was self-educated.

"He was a very intelligent guy and a very nice man with a great heart. He was kind. He was a great guy. Jack was very generous with his time; he was never impatient and would take time to help out younger artists and teach them things. He was a great storyteller and an all-around mensch! He was a good guy to have for a friend, and there was not a better friend a guy could have had!

"Jack was a professional. Part of that was getting to work and being at the drawing table every day. He always did it to the

THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN
"THE FURY OF THE FREAK!"
"IT'S MY PLAN! YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TURNED TO SCRAP YET! I'M GOING TO MAKE A FREAK! I'LL BE RULER OF ALL THIS! I'LL BE STOPPED!"
TITANICALLY WRITTEN BY: STAN LEE
TREMENDOUSLY DRAWN BY: ADAM AUSTIN
TUMULTUOUSLY INKED BY: GARY MICHAELS
TIMOROUSLY LETTERED BY: SAM ROSEN

"The Fury of the Freak" from Tales Of Suspense #75 (Mar 1966). "Gary Michaels" (Jack Abel) inks over "Adam Austin" (Gene Colan) pencils.

best of his ability. He was so intelligent that he could have done any number of jobs, but he chose to do comics. Jack and other older artists, are underappreciated and relatively unknown to today's fans, but they should be more widely recognized for what they've contributed. Like they say, 'They don't make them like that anymore!'"

(EDITOR'S NOTE: *Rich Parker, of Marvel's* Beavis & Butt-Head *comic, is assembling a tribute/benefit book by many artists who knew Jack Abel. Stories about Jack Abel will be told in a comic book format. Volunteers include Mark Evanier and Sergio Aragones, Klaus Janson, Bob McLeod, Walt Simonson, Al Milgrom, Terry Austin, Marie Severin, Alan Kupperberg, Joe Kubert, Steve Mitchell, Howard Chaykin, and a bunch of others. Hopefully, by the time this article appears, the book will be out. Proceeds will go to Jack Abel's widow and/or the American Heart Association.*)

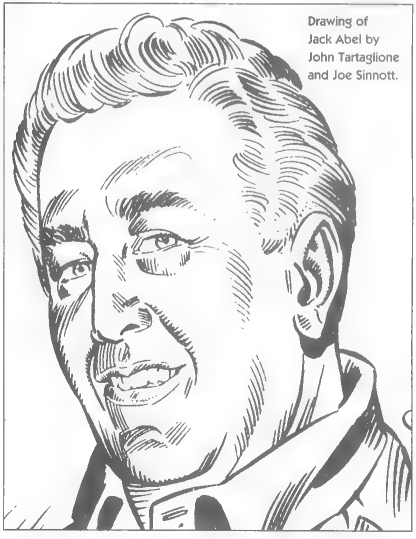
Gene Colan (artist)

"Jack Abel was one of the nicest people in the business. I really didn't see him that often, but I remember that he was always courteous and had a good sense of humor. He treated everyone with kindness and fairness. He was a true professional and enjoyed the work that he did. When he wasn't able to continue his art, he became a proofreader up at Marvel. He was a good person, and he will be missed."

Joe Giella (artist)

"What I remember most about Jack is that he had a very good sense of humor, which I enjoyed, no matter how much pressure we had. We used to meet occasionally, maybe once or twice a month if the timing was right when he would deliver or I would deliver. Everytime we would meet, he would always have a smile on his face. He was always positive; never negative." ■

The author would like to publicly thank all those who took time to reminisce about Jack Abel… he will be missed. Our thoughts and good wishes go out to his family and friends. May they all find comfort in the fact that Jack left his mark on each and everyone who knew him or met him. His life was an inspiration to many. As a tribute to him, be positive, smile, and be kind to one another. Thanks also to Jerry Bails for information from his Who's Who Of American Comic Books, *Joe Kubert, Peter David, Steve Mitchell, Alan Kupperberg, Russ Heath, Rick Parker, Gene Colan, and Joe Giella.*



Drawing of Jack Abel by John Tartaglione and Joe Sinnott.

WonderCon Blasts into Oakland April 25-27, '97!

Oakland, CA—WonderCon, Northern California's largest convention of comic book arts, arrives at The Oakland Convention Center April 25-27. The 11th annual gathering features three full days of fun for fans of comic books, movie previews and Japanese Animation. More than 200 professional comic book artists and writers, top comic publishers, sneak previews of upcoming comics, movies, and video games, and a benefit auction of original comic book art will thrill thousands of visitors, from serious collectors to casual fans.

The Harvey Awards, the "Academy Awards" of the comic book industry, will be presented at WonderCon on Friday, April 25. Presented for the first time from the Bay Area, the awards honor national achievements in the comic book medium. The Harvey Awards are the only industry awards competition nominated and judged by industry creative professionals.

The auction of original comic book art and memorabilia will benefit the Literacy Volunteers of America, Northern California Chapter. Past WonderCon auctions and events have raised in excess of $40,000 for LVA.

"Every year, WonderCon gets bigger and better," said Joe Field, WonderCon organizer. "Its continued growth and success shows the popularity of these arts throughout Northern California."

The convention will be at the Oakland Convention Center, 550 10th Street at Broadway in Oakland, just steps away from the 12th Street BART station.

WonderCon hours are Friday, April 25 from noon to 7 PM; Saturday, April 26 from 10 AM to 7 PM and Sunday, April 27 from 11 AM to 6 PM. Tickets are available in advance from many Bay Area comic book retailers or directly from WonderCon at $12 per day or $30 for all three days. Mail order checks or money orders should be sent to WonderCon, 4644 Geary Boulevard, Box #135, San Francisco, CA 94118. Tickets will also be available from all BASS outlets and at the door for $15 per day or $35 for all three days. Children 6-12 are half price. Children under 6 are admitted free with adult admission.

For more information, call the WonderCon information line at (510) 464-1120.

Acclaim pays tribute to 60 years of Comic Book History

Acclaim Comics' recently revamped Valiant Heroes line of comics will pay homage to the creators of Golden Age and Silver Age in their new series Dr. Tomorrow. Set in the Valiant universe of the 1940s, this book follows the life and career of one of the World War II era Valiant characters through the tumultuous changes society (and comics) went through.

The artist and style of each issue will change to resemble a particular era. Atomic Paintbrush, the coloring house responsible for Acclaim's Valiant Heroes titles, is changing the color style to match the feel of the comics from each era, and even the logo will change to match.

Each issue will also feature a text piece spotlighting legendary comic creators from the issues era. Jack Kirby, Will Eisner, and Joe Kubert, respectively, will be profiled in the first three issues. Wally Wood and Alex Toth will be among those profiled in future issues.

"We're mirroring the history of the comics in the same way we mirror the changes in society," said Fabian Nicieza, Acclaim's editor in chief.

Written by Valiant, Marvel & DC veteran, Bob Layton, Dr. Tomorrow is set in 1942, as Bart Simms, the son of a World War II munitions corporate magnate, stumbles upon a device that will alter the destiny of humanity: a fully loaded Angel Computer with five gigs of memory, 188 megabytes of RAM, and DVD's loaded with all of the most important information in the world of 1998—fifty six years in the future! But is this computer Simms' chance to be Earth's greatest hero or is it simply Pandora's Box?

Dr. Tomorrow spans six decades as Simms struggles more and more desperately to hold onto his glory and ideals, even as the world around him grows darker and grimmer. A series of guest artists, including Dick Giordano, Gil Kane, and Neal Adams, are scheduled to do work on future issues. Other creators who've been invited to participate, include Joe Simon, Dick Ayers and Carmine Infantino.

This 12-part saga spins out of Mark Waid and Brian Augustyn's Operation: Stormbreaker "event" special. The "events" are a special one-shot concept Acclaim has launched in lieu of the multi-issue crossovers so common in recent years. Man of the Atom, their new take on Solar, was the first of these specials.

Operation: Stormbreaker is due in stores in April, Nicieza said. Dr. Tomorrow debuts in May.

Catch The Spirit with Will Eisner's latest project!

Watchmen Creators Reunite for new *Overstreet's FAN* series Eisner, Moore, Gibbons kick off issues

Fans of Will Eisner's The Spirit need wait no longer for new adventures from one of comics' classic icons. Celebrating the upcoming debut of Kitchen Sink's *The Spirit: The New Adventures*, a new series featuring Will Eisner's classic creation, *Overstreet's FAN* is releasing *The Spirit: The New Adventures FAN* Editions, an exclusive three-issue mini-series which will be distributed free in the polybag with *Overstreet's FAN* #25-27.

"Even before we began including our *FAN* Edition comics in the polybag with *FAN*, we've been looking for a story that would be of special interest to *Comic Book Marketplace* readers," explained Robert M. Overstreet, publisher of *Overstreet's FAN*. "Now I believe we've found a story that will interest everyone who enjoys and truly loves comics."

With his pioneering use of splash pages, exciting camera angles, and dynamic layouts, Will Eisner created the quintessential noir series

in The Spirit and established much of the modern vocabulary of comics. Armed with nothing more than his own intelligence, two hard fists, and a seemingly endless ability to absorb punishment, Eisner's Spirit fights for justice among the twisting alleyways, looming skyscrapers, and rain swollen gutters of the crime-infested metropolis called Central City. Beyond the reach of the law, this lone, unorthodox fighter in the shadowy battleground of crime, became a legend.

In this new series, a wide array of creators get their chance to concoct perils and pitfalls for The Spirit. Presented as an introduction to Eisner's classic character and the new series, the *FAN Editions* also feature the re-teaming of one of the most influential creative duos in comics history–Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, co-creators of the landmark Watchmen series.

Artist Dave Gibbons, excited over the opportunity to illustrate the adventures of The Spirit, admitted, "I bought my first Spirit comic book when I was about fourteen.. I returned to it over and over, virtually memorizing its contents.... It would have been enough for the fourteen-year-old me to have even met Will Eisner; to have his friendly blessing to work on The Spirit far exceeds my wildest boyhood dreams!"

Will Eisner himself, working on collaborative variant covers for the *FAN Edition* comics, added, "Happily, men like [Frank] Miller, [Neil] Gaiman, Moore, and Gibbons came forward and, with a concern that impressed me, have produced splendid adaptations that are unique to them yet retain the mythology of The Spirit. It is awesome to be in the company of these modern titans of the medium."

Over the years, the mystery and appeal of The Spirit has remained undiminished, and there's little doubt that this *FAN Edition Spirit* miniseries, introducing the Kitchen Sink series, will thrill comic fans everywhere. 1997 is sure to see a rebirth of interest in The Spirit, and *Overstreet's FAN* #25-27 is where it all begins. ■

Looking for a Bargain...

"Things were quiet for a while, but they are really starting to pick up." That is the comment I've been receiving from most of the dealers, collectors and retail shops. "Everyone is looking for a bargain", was the other comment that was heard. While sellers waited with anticipation for the market to reveal its new direction, it soon began to pick up again around mid-January, and collectors are resuming the hunt. What are they looking for? Let's take a look at the survey results.

Pre Golden Age/Golden Age (1933-45)

Prices seemed to have stabilized for the high-end Timely books, and that has brought a number of collectors "out of the woodwork" to pick up a few of these. DC keys were also quickly snapped up when priced reasonably. Multiples of Guide is still only realized on a few specific issues, while the majority have found a stable platform at or just over graded Guide.

Sales: All Star #1 GD $1,400; All Select #3 FN/VF $1000; Comic Pages V3 #4 VF- $825; Comic Cavalcade #2 VG $425; DareDevil #1 GD+ $1,000; Daring Comics #10 FN $300; Detective #31 FR $910; Funny Pages V2 #6 FN+ $310; Flash Comics #18 VF/NM $1450; Hit Comics #25 FR $100; Human Torch #2 (#1) GD $2,300, #5 AppFN/VF $1,300; Jumbo #10 FN $450; Leading Comics #1 VG $700; Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies #1 GD- $700; Marvel Mystery #12 appFN+ $525, #19 GD- $160; Military Comics #4 NM- $1,375; Mystery Men #7 appVF $780; Pep Comics #1 VG $1,480, #22 GD $1,100; Red Ryder #1 appVF/NM $1,500; Rolly Polly #1 FN $95 USA #7 appFN $475; Speed Comics #1 GD $425; Spirit #2 VF/NM $180 Weird Comics #2 VF- $880.

Post Golden Age/Pre Silver Age (1946-56)

It's as if everyone took time off over the holidays, sat down with their Gerber guides, and made a new list for 1997. Books that are priced below $800... in high grade... semi-keys... first issues, and/or rare are finding an absolutely huge demand in early 1997! Pre-Code Sci-Fi and Good-Girl-Art books still lead the way, with the more esoteric books coming on strong. There are some great issues still being "discovered" that are not pictured in Gerber, especially the Matt Baker Romance books. Collectors are literally clamoring for these.

Sales: Best Western #58 VF/NM $175; Bold Stories #2 GD $345; Campus Romance #2 VF $85; Hi Ho #1 VF+ $210; Jeep Comics #3 FN $95; Junior Comics #11 VF/NM (Loon Copy) $400; #12 VF/NM (Loon Copy) $400; Love Romances #77 VF $65 and #82 VF $65; Phantom Lady #16 NM (Loon Copy) $1,295; #18 NM (Loon Copy) $925; Straight Arrow #1 FN $195; Wings Comics #88 FN $150; #93 FN $150; Zoot #7 VF/NM (Loon Copy) $550; #14 FN $150.

Silver Age (1956-69)

The argument for a price adjustment for mid-grade non-key issues may be falling on certain deaf ears in some geographical areas, but those that are required to sell their books are finding that discounts do work. A sliding scale is in effect, with early DC, key books, and high grade the exception, which isn't too surprising. Selling extremely well are early Incredible Hulk and Fantastic Four, while high grade issues of the later DC "short runs" (e.g. Hawk and Dove, Spectre, Bat Lash, etc) are doing very well.

Sales: Bat Lash #1 NM $32 Lois Lane #1 FN $950 Hulk #2 appFN+ $1,400 Amazing Spiderman #1 GD $980 The Spectre #1 NM $110 Mission Impossible #1 VF/NM $135 Flash #105 FN $1,950 Tales To Astonish #22 VF/NM $240 Showcase #57 NM $145 Strange Tales #71 VF/NM $250 Phantom Stranger #1 NM $92 The Atom #1 GD+ $140 Batman #105 VG $155 Captain Action #1 NM $90 Captain America #109 FN $22 Dr. Strange #169 VF/NM $125 Journey into Mystery #84 VF/NM $1,100 Mystery in Space #110 NM $36

Continued on page 68

GREG PHARIS & DAVE GAISEZ
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(619) 698-1177

It's almost March and already people are discussing the big Con. People are excited and talking about what comics they'd like to add to their collections, and we notice some trends

Wonder Woman is an extremely popular title. Sure the #105 is still that title's Holy Grail, but it is being discovered that the #106 is just as difficult as are all of the 104 covers Wonder Woman's popularity also continues through the early Bronze Age issues (especially 52 pagers) with that elusive #199 (the incredible Jeff Jones cover) and #200 being the most sought after.

Possibly the interest in Supergirl's new title is causing a demand in the "Maid of Might's" appearances in Action and Adventure. In high grade those issue are toughies and it doesn't help that these books are so low in the Guide.

A few recent sales are worth noting: Planet Comics #42 VG+ $95; Avengers Golden Reprint #4 VG+ $25; Sgt Fury #13 VG $45; Adventure #253 VG+ $55; Jimmy Olson #100 VG+ $10; Wonder #19 VG+ $135, Uncle Scrooge #6 VG $50; Uncle Scrooge #36 VF+ $100; WDC&S #35 VG- $75, #58 (Flag cover) GD+ $30.

These mostly lower grade copies did not linger on the shelf, and were quickly snapped up by local collectors Overall, customers are being very selective in their purchases–as the market still strives for stability

On a closing note–the return of Star Wars to the big screen has awakened the toy action figure part of the market, but there are still deals to be had. 'til next time .. *Continued on page 68*

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Bronze Age (1970-79)

Early '70s collectors tend to sit back and smile when they hear the line, "Scarcity in the '70s books is just relative, and not on par with any other era." In contrast to this, Tony Stark's latest article for Gemstone points out the rarity of some of these 1970's books. Some long-time East Coast dealers have never even seen any of these issues or titles. Reports are that later high grade issues of the Gold Key Star Trek series are becoming quite difficult to find and increasing in demand.

Sales: Action #437 NM $22; Adventure #425 NM $16; All Star Western #1 NM $18; Amazing Spider-Man #102 VF/NM $35; Avengers #83 NM $14; Batman #232 VF/NM $98; Brothers Of The Spear #1 VF/NM $20; DC 100 Page Super Spectacular #20 VF/NM $32; Dudley Do Right #2 NM $40; Hulk #181 FN+ $210; Iron Fist #14 VF/NM $125; L.H.'s Laurel and Hardy #1 VG $22; Nick Fury #15 VF/NM $32; Ringo Kid #1 NM $14; Scooby Doo #1 (GK) VF/NM $65; Super Friends #1 NM $20; Weird War #1 GD $15; X-Men #94 VF/NM $400, #100 NM $55; Young Romance #197 NM $32.

A little fun is being injected back into the hobby... and a new sense of discovery and awareness for some issues and titles is building momentum long before the Summer convention season. It looks like both collectors and dealers are already preparing for an active Spring sales season, especially with mail order catalogs and auctions. As we approach the publication of Price Guide #27 in April, plenty of collectors are already trying to predict the values of their favorite issues. And as usual, the comic book marketplace is bristling with last minute before-the-Guide-come-out deals... With many trying to beat possible increases on high demand titles and issues. ■

MARKET REPORTS

Continued from page 66

LON WEBB • DARK ADVENTURE INTL.

2785 BUFORD HIGHWAY, STE. 102B
DULUTH, GEORGIA 30136
(770) 232-1931

The southeastern market is as eclectic as ever with no clear trends currently developing. Having the correct items at the right price seems to be the norm here, and we are taking advantage of it.

Seventies books are selling exceptionally well, especially 1969-1975 DCs. Demand for high grade DC Giants has far outdistanced local supplies. Horror, mystery, and war titles lead the pack on our request lists.

Golden Age comics have about peaked out in prices locally, and, to an extent, nationally. Strong Canadian, English & European sales have boosted our averages, but again, lowered pricing on books below VF ensures continued turnover

It is my experience that many dealers (including myself) bought many books at high margins during the Golden Age explosion and the market's sudden downswing caught many of us in a cash flow pinch. As a result, buying prices have become much lower on most books and nonexistent on others in many areas

Many don't understand that dealers sit on a large amount of inventory and the support price for an average comic is based on a dealer's stock sell-through on that comic. Supply and demand exists in every business, but acutely in this one.

Long time collectors, dealers, investors are watching the back issue industry closely because of events occurring in the new market (high pricing/lower sales/company bankruptcies). A few even seem to be "panic selling" this material.

My take on the big picture is that retail sales are down (much of this is seasonal), mail order is stable (or up, in many cases), and dealers are only buying what they need (and can handle). Collectors are basically looking for what they need at a low price (and selling their better material on their terms). This hobby has seen ups and downs many times before... only now, because of high values, there is much more money at stake. We sometimes forget that it's all just paper, staples and a lot of fun.

Esoteric and obscure comics are enjoying intense popularity. Titles like Mad Hatter, Crime Smashers and Love Romances are commanding attention for story content and art. 1950's horror and all precode mystery books are selling well in all grades. Seduction (SOTI) books are stable, funny animal is backsliding here, and memorabilia is exploding. I'll report our March auction results in these pages.

Sales: Calgary Eye-Opener, May 1929 - $50; Captain America Kite (1966) - $81; Comic Cavalcade #3 VF $853; Fantastic Comics #1 appFN- $558; G.I. Combat #87 GD $133; House of Mystery #174 NM $57; Josie #1 NM $145; Phantom Lady #20 VF+ $800; Red Seal #18 NM $354; Showcase #73 NM $151; Slave Girl #1 VF- $540; Superman Puzzle (1940) #1 $185; Tales of Suspense #40 NM $670.

GREG WHITE

17 W MONUMENT AVENUE
KISSIMMEE, FLORIDA 34741
(407) 870-0400

Hello from central Florida. Our winter has been mild and sales have been marginal. We make a few good sales then have a flat period. There has been no convention activity as of late. Since 1996 was a flat year for us at the convention level, we are anxious to see if the new year perks up a bit. I hope so.

Perhaps when the number of 'flea market' dealers that set up at each show begin to decline, we will be able to entice the older collectors (who purchase vintage books) to once again attend the shows on a regular basis. This is my 26th consecutive year of setting up at comic conventions, and I fear for their future!

Silver Age Comics 1955-1969

We had a good month selling low to mid range grade books. We had to shave the price in most cases but did move some products. Marvel and DC sold at equal levels. We are still having problems moving titles from Dell, Charlton, Harvey, Archie and other lesser known publishers. I believe many of the Overstreet prices are too high on these books. We purchased a large group of 1950's Dell Giants and as I looked over the suggested retail price in the Overstreet Guide I question how many collectors will be willing to lay out that type of money. The Guide price should reflect an average that a book will sell for time and time again – not be based on a one time isolated sale. Think about it. We did purchase a low grade run of Spider-Man # 2-37 at a

ocal toy show. Also a group of lower grade DC and ACG comics came in last week. This will help to fill our comic boxes

Sales: Amazing Spider-Man #2 FR $95,122 NM $98; Fantastic Four #8 VG $175; Batman #155 VG $60; Showcase #40 FR $40; Captain America #100 VF $195; Hulk #102 VF/NM $150; Superboy #100 VG $25; Silly Symphony #1 FN $100.

Golden Age Comics (1933-1955)

A quiet month. A few sales but nothing earthshaking. Local money is tight when it comes to expensive books ($1000 - up). Mail order or convention is our best route to move those books . but not much happening in recent weeks We saw a competitor purchase a great collection of pulp magazines last week without ever getting a chance to outbid him. It frustrates me when collectors won't make a couple of extra calls to see if there is someone who will pay more. I know what the group sold for and would have been happy to offer $1000-$1500 more. We did not purchase any comics this month for resale. A bit of a dry spell

Sales: Batman #6 GD $395; Military #34 FN $100; More Fun Comics #90 VG $150, All Flash #20 GD $60

Original Artwork & Toys

We had some activity within this area recently We purchased a nice group of early 90's Disney animation drawings featuring Baloo and Simba. One man brought us three boxed MEGO toys from the 1970s. Also a small group of 1960's boxed model kits came in along with some 1950's TV Guides I am always striving to build my stock in this area Demand continues for Capt. Action dolls, character die cast toys and vintage Disneyana

Sales: Flintstone Kids cel $75, Baloo animation drawing $40, Aurora Creature model boxed $195, Aquaman Capt. Action suit $125, Capt Action parachute kit $75, James Bond Thunderball board game $50

I'd like to extend a special invitation to all CBM readers when visiting the Walt Disney World area please stop by and say hello. ■

Collectors should note that the opinions expressed in CBM Market Reports are solely those of the individual dealers and collectors who contribute them. Seasoned hobbyists are acutely aware that prices vary based on geographic location.

IN MEMORIAM

Dan Barry

(July 11, 1923 - January 25, 1997)

How does one acknowledge the life & career of a great artist, Dan Barry? The very mention of his name conjures up visions of thousands upon thousands of comics pages that dazzled us with exciting compositions, thrilling angles & perspectives and his facility for creating dramatic effects.

Perhaps I can best define Dan by recalling the more personal moments shared with him, since his professional career is already well known.

Growing up with my brother Dan was a multi-faceted experience ... on the one hand enjoying his wonderful moments of caring and good humor....and on the other, his explosive outbursts of anger and intolerance. He sought perfection in people as he did in his artwork....standards that no one could live up to...

During my early years in comics I was indeed fortunate to be working with Dan who was producing some of the greatest art in the annals of comics.

Oh, those countless nights we spent burning the midnight oil, racing against deadline. Many of those nights were spent working at such a frenzied pace that we found ourselves in a state of giddiness, laughing at everything that came to mind. However, some of our best work was produced during those all-night stands.

On many occasions, when Dan contracted to do complete comic books involving advertising media, he would call upon the services of other artists to assist him. The standards he set in those projects remained a powerful influence on the artists who worked with him. I'm sure that every one of them alive today will attest to that.

Those same standards that Dan established applied to ME as well! He was a tough taskmaster. It was like walking barefooted through a hot-bed of coals for me...trying to satisfy his requirements....but after much frustration and pain, I eventually became his most capable associate. So much so, that it would upset him when I chose to work on my own accounts over HIS!

To sum up, if I were asked what Dan's greatest artistic attributes were, I would say. TASTE and QUALITY! He left an indelible mark in both these areas.

—Sy Barry

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MARKETPLACE MAIL

Continued from page 7

once again turned up some excellent contacts on the character.

All of this to leads up to a request for help. I would love to hear from Mr. Newman about his work on both on Tom Corbett at Dell Comics and the Sunday newspaper strip. Was there a plotline summary he was given or were the stories under his control. If he did receive direction, was it from the producers of the TV show, the radio show or the advertisers? So many questions, so few answers. Several fans are working on the scripting of the TV shows and will be putting together a timeline with plots, as well as running down the old kinescopes. I will be adding what I know about the show on my website and am putting the finishing touches on both the newspaper as well as the comics web page. Your interview with Mr. Newman could not have come at a better time. Any help on my researching of this icon of the early TV era would be greatly welcomed. I will be uploading the comics page very soon (within the week, hopefully with information about Mr. Newman.)

Please drop by the website and let me know what you think. It's not an "action" type site… I concentrate on content with the idea of enhancing the history of our favorite space heroes. Plus I want all types of browsers dropping in and getting or giving information without the hassle of frames, cgi script, or java problems.

Look forward to issue #44 (I pick it up Monday). Keep up the good work. Till later… Spaceman's Luck,

Ed Pippin, via email

W. T. Vinson?

The Wood issue (#44) was a dandy! 1) If the guy who wrote "Wood All Over the Place" is so swift, why the heck did he miss Wally Wood's Flash Gordon strip in Phantom #18 (King)? I'm going to punch him in the jaw next time I look in the mirror.

2) The cover of Wham-O-Giant Comics ain't by Wally! It's the work of W. T. Vinson. See his signature beside the race car wheel at the bottom of the front cover, right by the gladiator's foot and the green alien's hand? You did a marvy job restoring this cover, by the way.

3) The Clawfang two-pager from Thrill-O-Rama #2 ain't drawn by Wally! Al Williamson did it. But Wally wrote it.

4) Is that Wally in the photo from Horror Of Party Beach? You better believe it. Another photo showed his co-worker Russ Jones, who was the first editor of Creepy.

5) "Battle of Britain" from Blazing Combat #3 is also reprinted in World Of Wood #3 (Eclipse). Most of Wally's work for Warren is also reprinted in World Of Wood #1-4, in neat and nifty color. Also, Warren reprinted most of Wally's work for them in their own Eerie #131, which also reprints "Battle of Britain". There are also other Thunder Agents reprint books, but I'm darned if I'm going to hunt them up right now.

6) The Marvel pulp article was nice. If Chris Malins wants more info on Goodman's pulps, check out The Illustrated History Of Science Fiction (can't find my copy, or I'd give the editor's name), which has some neat color cover repros and some information on pulps like Marvel Science Stories. Also, Savage Tales #8 (Jan. 1975) has an article on the three-issue KA-ZAR pulp from Goodman.

7) Will Murray did a fine job on the Spider-Man article. I'm still hoping they'll let you do more Doc Savages, Will. It's really John Sunlight plotting against you, right?

8) Also liked Pat's Another World article and Nolan's look at the Fawcett movie comics. Link's "Forgotten Master" article was also nice, but that brings us to...

9) Link's statement, "They (the Jewish members of the EC crew) were amazed to see how wacky the quiet goyim (Wally Wood) could be." WRONG!!! Goyim is plural...more than one goy, like seraphim means more than one seraph. "Im", in Hebrew, is like the "s" ending in English. So, unless Wally could multiply himself, he should be called "the quiet goy". I know this, and I'm a Gentile!

10) But the one article I liked the best was Dave Spurlock's "Diary of a Wally Wood Fan". Which brings us to...

11) On page 60, you label the illo "The author's rendition of Wood's 'Radian'." Nope. That's Dave's own character Recycle Man. Radian is on page 44.

12) Well...Dave's piece is almost my favorite in the issue. My real favorite was the photos on pgs. 56-57 of Kym and that artist with the guitar...what's his name? Willy Weed, or something... yours very truly,

Lou Mougin, Texas

1) The guy who wrote "Wood All Over the Place" is a good Joe, so lay off of him!

2) I think the pencils and/or inks are by Wood, but that's just my opinion. Roger Hill.

can you settle this one?

3) The Clawfang two-pager from Thrill-O-Rama #2 wasn't drawn by Wally… we should have made that clearer on the caption.

4) You are soooo right… that is a rare photo of Wally in Horror Of Party Beach! Got to add that one to my want list!

7) Will did a great piece of detective work regarding Amazing Fantasy #16.

Hey Lou, let's start a W. T. Vinson fan club. Ah Lou… uh… who was he?

Cover Doubles

Back again with another gold and silver age comic cover game. This one is called "Match the cover double" or "Deja-vu all over again". DC put out at least six pairs of comic covers that are near doubles of each other. Can you match the first set of covers below with the second set? (It's OK to use a Gerber Photo-Journal Guide!). Best of luck!

SET 1

1) Batman #9 (spotlight cover)

2) Detective #233 (origin of Batwoman)

3) Action #193 (Superman/Midas touch cover)

4) Adventure #239 ("Super Tricks of the Dog of Steel")

5) Superman #123 ("The Girl of Steel")

6) All American #20

SET 2

a) Jimmy Olsen #45 ("Tom Baker, Power Lad")

b) Detective #169 (Batman / Walking Bomb cover)

c) Batman #16

d) Detective #276 ("The Return of Bat-Mite")

e) Jimmy Olsen #33 ("The Human Flame Thrower") f) Detective #37

Answers: 1) c (2) d (3) b (4) e (5) a (6) f

Robert J. Baldwin, California
(818) 708-9535

I'm proud to say I got five out six. Great game Robert. send more.

It was Bob Montana

Gary, issue #43 was another fine effort! Each month CBM continues to prove it's worth as the source for Golden and Silver Age comic lore. However, I did find one error. Within the Archie article, the author writes that one of the publishers of MLJ, Inc. created the Archie character, with Bob Montana only supplying the artwork. A few months ago I had the pleasure of interviewing Irv Novick for an upcoming issue of

Dave Berkebile offers checklist of Adams' DC work

Thank you for the terrific interview of Neal Adams in issue #40. It was nostalgic and at the same time gave a whole new perspective of Adams' work of the period and of the inner workings of DC during that time.

The only thing I felt the interview lacked was a checklist of Adams' DC work. So I took the liberty of enclosing for you, a detailed Adams' checklist (broken into Marvel, DC and Warren; I never checked out the Warren stuff too much, since most of it was collected in Eerie #125, so that part is not complete).

I also wouldn't mind a follow-up interview with Adams covering his Marvel work (and why there was so little of it) and his Warren and underground/alternative publishing work, much of which is not listed in the Guide.

Hope you and others find my checklist useful. —Dave Berkebile, Florida

Neal Adams At DC

Action #425
(Giordano) 6p 7/73

Adventures of Bob Hope
106 (–) 23p 9/67
107 (–) 24p 11/67
108 (–) 23p 1/68
109 (–) 23p 3/68

Adventures of Jerry Lewis
101 (–) 23 p 8/67
102 (–) 23p 10/67
103 (–) 23p 12/67
104 (–) 2/68

All-New Limited Collectors' Edition
C-56 Superman-vs.-Ali (Giordano, Austin) 73p 7/78

Amazing World of DC Comics Special Edition
1 (1976) (Reproduced from pencils) 5p 2/76

Aquaman
50 (–) 9p 4/70
51 (–) 8p 6/70
52 (–) 9p 8/70

Batman
219 (Giordano) 8p 2/70
232 (Giordano) 22p 6/71
234 (Giordano) 15p 8/71
237 (Giordano) 25p 12/71
243 (Giordano) 24p 8/72
244 (Giordano) 16p 9/72
245 (Giordano) 15p 10/72
251 (–) 23p 9/73
255 (Giordano) 2op 4/74

Brave and the Bold
79 (–) 24p 9/68
80 (Giordano) 23p 11/68
81 (Colletta) 24p 1/69
82 (–) 23p 3/69
83 (–) 24p 5/69
84 (–) 24p 7/69
85 (–) 23p 9/69
86 (–) 23p 11/69
93 (–) 23p 1/71
102 (–) 9p 7/72

Challengers of the Unknown
74 (–) 7p 7/70

Detective Comics
369 (–) 9p 11/67
395 (Giordano) 16p 1/70
397 (Giordano) 15p 3/70
400 (Giordano) 16p 6/70
402 (Giordano) 16p 8/70
404 (Giordano) 15p 10/70
407 (Giordano) 15p 1/71
408 (Giordano) 15p 2/71
410 (Giordano) 15p 4/71

Flash
217 (Giordano) 10p 9/72
218 (Giordano) 10p 11/72
219 (Giordano) 10p 1/73
226 (Giordano) 8p 4/74

Green Lantern
76 (–) 23p 4/70
77 (Giacoia) 23p 6/70
78 (Giacoia) 24p 7/70
79 (Adkins) 22p 9/70
80 (Giordano) 22p 10/70
81 (Giordano) 22p 12/70
82 (Giordano) 22p 3/71
83 (Giordano) 22p 5/71
84 (Wrightson) 22p 7/71
85 (–) 22p 9/71
86 (Giordano) 25p 11/71
87 (Giordano) 26p 1/72
89 (Giordano) 25p 5/72

House of Mystery
178 (–) 7p 2/69
179 (Orlando) 10p 4/69
186 (Giordano) 12p 6/70
224 (Dillin p/Adams i) 6p 5/74
236 (Kirchner p/Adams i) 9p 10/75

Hot Wheels
6 (Giordano) 14p 2/71

House of Secrets
82 (Dillin p/Adams i) 5p 11/69

Continued on page 73

CBM. When asked about Bob Montana and the Archie character, Irv emphatically stated that Bob created the character, not MLJ, Inc. In fact, he vividly remembers being in the MLJ offices when Bob M. brought in the final character design, plot of the first story, and the basic concept to present to MLJ. As fans of Golden Age comics know all too well, the question of 'who' created 'what' during this period remains an enigma as memories blur. Nevertheless, Irv is certain that Bob was the creator. Aside from this understandable error, the article was filled with insightful information and fun facts. Best.

John Coates, Georgia

Removable Magic Tape?

In response to Eric G. Blackmore's letter in CBM #44: finally someone else has asked about tape! In my experience, I have used and/or seen virtually everything to seal comic bags - masking tape, clear tape, duct tape, staples, glue, cement (okay, maybe not cement)...

For me, there are four things I looked for when I was hunting for the best type of tape to use. First, it should keep the bag sealed when it is supposed to be sealed. Second, opening the bag shouldn't be made difficult by overly sticky tape. Third, the tape should leave as little residue as possible in case it needs to be removed completely. Last, it should cause no tearing--if the tape or the bag. So I experimented--for a long time.

And then one day, while in an office supply store, I noticed that Scotch made a tape called "Removable Magic Tape." I don't know how magical it is, but it has the stickiness of a post-it note, which was absolutely perfect for my needs. It goes on and off with ease, doesn't cause any tearing, keeps bags closed, and doesn't leave any gunk behind when removed. I don't know if there is a "best type" of tape to use, but this has worked for me.

There is one other benefit that I didn't notice for a while - when you inadvertently get the tape caught on that lovely comic inside the bag, this tape peels off safely. Not that I would recommend applying it to a really brittle book just for fun or anything...

Steve Rubin, Massachusetts

Thanks for the tip Steve, your news may just be the discovery of the decade!!!

Jennifer Owens (age 11) and Rebecca Owens (age 9) show off some of their Dad's beloved Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer collection. The family that collects Rudolph together... stays together!

Kids Love Rudolph

Great seeing you at the Las Vegas Con in December, it was just too bad the con itself wasn't bigger. Have you ever been to a Comic book/Erotica/Computer/ Cowboy Gift convention before? Weird! While the dealers may not have had great fortune, I certainly did! I found a copy of the highly elusive 1955-56 Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer from DC. That left me with just one more Gerberless issue to find, the 1959/60 issue. Guess what I found one week later in the CBG?

WOW, Rudolph is a tough set to complete! Have you ever seen any high grade issues of this series before? Was there a Mile High set of these books? My best copy is the 1962/63 Giant Annual (the scarcest DC 80 page giant, period!), and it is only in fine. I have personally never seen any issues in better shape than that. If I can ever find a Limited Collector's Edition C-20 (treasury size), I might write an article about the series some day.

In closing, I have enclosed a picture of why collecting comics is so much fun. They are the reason I searched out all those tough Rudolph issues, and were as thrilled as I was to find those last issues! Yes, we even read them!

Danny Owens, Nevada

I've been a fan and avid collector of the DC Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer title for three decades... they are wonderful, obscure, true annuals, and hard as heck to find in grade! I wholeheartedly agree that the 1962/63 Giant squarebound issue is the scarcest DC 80 page giant! Thanks for writing and say hello to Jennifer and Rebecca from everyone at CBM!

Spider-Man Puzzler

Today the temperature here in Toronto is a balmy -24 C, and that's without the wind chill factor, a perfect day to re-read back issues of Comic Book Marketplace. In issue #41, Robert Baldwin posed the question, "on which covers of Action Comics does Superman not appear?" This started me thinking which covers of the Amazing Spider-Man would apply to this puzzler. My first thoughts were that there were very few covers without Spider-Man and only two covers came to mind (I won't reveal these now). So go ahead and try to guess which covers do not have a costumed Spidey?

Well, I had to utilize my copies of the Official Marvel Index to the Amazing Spider-Man, it was much easier than flipping through my collection, and I don't have those early issues yet. So here they are. Amazing Spider-Man #s *22, *58, *63, *72, *79, 177, *206, *223, *232, *235, 238, 241, 247, *264, 279, 284, 289, 293, 296, 307, 347, 366, 405, 406, 410 and 411.

Interesting to note that the books indicated with a * depicted a Spider-Man warning beacon symbol. Peter Parker appears on covers on #s 79 and 206 and I debated upon the status of #39

which details Peter Parker in his tattered street clothes, his costume revealed. I suppose this one doesn't truly qualify. Also, #239 had Kraven clutching an empty Spider-Man costume, #247 has only Spider-Man's shadow, #307 has the Chameleon in Spidey's costume and #s 405 and 406 have the Scarlet Spider. So, of the 421 issues published to date, only 26 or 6% of the covers are drawn without the central figure on the cover, and don't try the argument that he appears on every cover in the Marvel logo in the top left corner.

I then wondered which artists were responsible for these covers. John Romita and his son are responsible for a total of nine. The rest are the work of various artists and I wonder whether these exceptions to the norm are the result of artistic brilliance or editorial suggestion.

Well, it was an interesting way to spend a frosty Saturday afternoon, and as to the two covers I mentioned earlier as ones I remembered, they were #s 72 and 293–both superb covers. While most of these 26 covers are beautiful, take a look at #241. Perhaps the worst cover in the history of Spider-Man.

Now I'd like to ask a question of my own. What issue of ASM contains only one drawing of Spider-Man in the entire book???? That should rack a few brains.

John R. Stuart, Ontario, Canada

We Love Michelle!

Allow me to take this opportunity to offer up some heartfelt praise for one of the most consistently entertaining aspects of CBM: the writing of Michelle Nolan. Her column, Nolan's Notebook, is a fine blend of personal experience and opinion, enthusiasm for the hobby, and historical research backed by reference to an extensive collection and an impressive array of statistical data.

The beat covered by Nolan is wide-ranging, indeed. In the 20-odd issues of CBM's current incarnation, the Notebook has reported on: Davey Crockett and Daniel Boone; the Marvel Family's brush with the horror genre; Blackhawk's "Machines of Menace"; the Farrell-Ajax superheros of the mid-1950s; Infantino's Detective Chimp; the pivotal year of 1956; the romance glut of the '50s; the romance phase of Sensation Comics; collecting Charlton comics; obscure one-shot titles; romance Westerns; non-existent comics; teen humor; the thin days of the mid-1950s for superhero comics; baseball comics; early '50s sci-fi; Sugar and Spike; Marvel's chameleon title, Venus, dim-witted

85 (G. Kane p/Adams r)
12p 5/70
90 (Buckler p/Adams i)
6p 3/71

Justice League
94 (–) 4p 11/71

Limited Collectors' Edition
C-31 (Superman theme park feature) 4p 11/74
C-48 (Superman's Fortress feature) 6p 11/76

Our Army At War
182 (–) 9p 7/67
183 (–) 9p 8/67
186 (–) 9p 11/67
240 (–) 8p 1/72

Phantom Stranger
5 (Draut) 23p 12/69

Spectre
2 (–) 23p 2/68
3 (–) 24p 4/68
4 (–) 24p 6/68
5 (–) 23p 8/68

Star Spangled War
134 (–) 14p 9/67
144 (Kubert) 23p 5/69

Strange Adventures
206 (G. Roussous) 17p 11/67
207 (–) 17p 12/67
208 (–) 17 p 1/68
209 (–) 23p 2/68
210 (–) 14p 3/68
211 (–) 17p 4/68
212 (–) 17p 6/68
213 (–) 17p 8/68
214 (–) 23p 10/68
215 (–) 17p 12/68
216 (–) 17p 2//69

Superman
249 (Dillin p/Adams i)
6p 3/72
254 (–) 7p 7/72

Sword of Sorcery
1 (Chaykin p/Adams i*)
23p 3/73
2 (Chaykin p/Adans i*)
23p 5/73

Teen Titans
20 (Cardy) 23p 4/69
21 (Cardy) 25p 6/69
22 (Cardy) 16p 8/69

Weird War Tales
8 (Harper p/Adams i)
7p 11/72

Weird Western Tales
12 (Wrightson) 4p 7/72
13 (–) 11p 9/72
15 (–) 12p 1/73

Weird Worlds
2 (Weiss p/Adams i*)
12p 11/72
3 (Weiss p/Adams i*)
12p 1/73

Witching Hour
8 (–) 11p 5/70
13 (Giordano) 4p 3/71

Wonder Woman
220 (uncredited part i)
20p 11/75

World's Finest
175 (–) 17p 5/68
176 (–) 18p 6/68

(–) Adams pencils and inks (no additional artist)
* credited under pseudonym "Crusty Bunkers"

Neal Adams At Marvel

Amazing Adventures
5 (Palmer) 10p 3/71
6 (Verpoorten) 10p 5/71
7 (Verpoorten) 10p 7/71
8 (Verpoorten) 10p 9/71
18 (Chiaramonte) 11p 5/73

Astonishing Tales
12 (–) 7p 6/72

Avengers
93 (Palmer) 34p 11/71
94 (Palmer) 13p 12/71
95 (Palmer) 21p 1/72
96 (Palmer) 21p 2/72

Conan
37 (–) 19p 4/74
44-49 part inks* (?)
116 (Buscema p/Adams i) 22p 11/80

Epic Illustrated
7 (–) 16p 8/81

Marvel Feature (1975)
1 (r Savage Sword #1)
10p 11/75

Marvel Treasury
6 (r Marvel Premiere 10) /75
15 Conan (r Sav. Tales 4, 7)

Marvel Premiere
10 (Brunner p/Adams i*)
19p 9/73
12 (Brunner p/Adams i*)
19p 11/73
13 (Brunner p/Adams i*)
19p 1/74
14 (Brunner p/Adams i*)
20p 3/74

Power Man
31 (S. Buscema p/Adams i*) 17p 5/76

Thor
180 (Sinnott) 20p 9/70
181 (Sinnott) 20p 10/70
Tower of Shadows
2 (Adkins) 7p 11/69

X-Men
56 (Palmer) 15p 5/69
57 (Palmer) 15p 6/69
58 (Palmer) 20p 7/69
59 (Palmer) 20p 8/69
60 (Palmer) 20p 9/69
61 (Palmer) 20p 10/69
62 (Palmer) 20p 11/69
63 (Palmer) 20p 12/69
65 (Palmer) 20p 12/69

Dracula Lives
2 (–) 13p 7/73
3 (Weiss p/Adams i*)
12p 10/73
10 i?

Kull and the Barbarians
1 (–) 9p 5/75
2 (Weiss p/Adams i)
10p 7/75
3 (Weiss p/Marcos i)
13p 9/75

Marvel Preview
1 (Cockrum p/Adams i*)
10p 7/75
20 (Bizarre Adv. - r of #1*) 9/80
28 (Bizarre Adv. Hama/Adams/Giordano/Austin) 20p 10/81

Savage Sword of Conan
1 (Estaban Maroto/Chua/Adams art) 10p 8/74
2 (Chaykin/Adams i*) 10p 10/74
3 (Buscema/Marcos - no credit listed to Adams) 23p 12/74
4 (no visible Adams art) 2/75
14 (Adams/"the Tribe") 39p 9/76
60 (pencil art) 20p 1/81
83 (reprints #1) 10p 12/82

Savage Tales
4 (G. Kane/Adams i) "Night of the Dark God" 21p 5/74
7 (Adams i*/Buscema) 14p 11/74

Unknown Worlds of S.F.
1 (–) 10p 2/76

Deadly Hands of Kung Fu
Special Album Edition 1 Summer/74

Haunt of Horror
4 (2p pencil sketch) 2/74

Monsters Unleashed
3 (G. Kane p/Adams i*) 13p 11/73
8 (r Tower of Shadows 2) 7p 8/74

*credited under pseudonym "Crusty Bunkers"

Neal Adams At Warren Magazines

Creepy
14 (–) "Fair Exchange" 8p
15
16
75 (–) "Thrillkill" 8p 11/75

Eerie
9
10 (–) "Voodoo Drum" 8p
11
22
23
42
53
125 (all-Adams r issue) 60p 10/81

Vampirella
1 (10p, 19p)

Adams work on fanzines and alternative and small press stuff like **Hot Stuff** not included. (But I can vouch for the fact it's not easy to track or find. If you have a list of these books, I'd love to see it.)

—Dave Berkebile, Florida

females of the comics; Scribbly; titles of the '40s and '50s that survived to the 100th issue mark; and DC's Big Eight. Whew!

But in addition to range, Michelle's writing also has depth. For example, in the course of chronicling the career of Detective Chimp in CBM #26, Nolan delves into the lead feature of the title in which that strip appeared, Rex, The Wonder Dog, and then explores the career of Rex's predecessor, Streak, the Wonder Dog, and the sometime ally of the Golden Age Green Lantern, Alan Scott. And how about the detailed lists that accompany "One Shot Wonders" (#31) and Michelle's fascinating investigation of possible non-existent comic books (#33), to pick a couple of examples from a crowd of candidates?

Month after month, Ms. Nolan delivers an entertaining and informative mix of personal remembrance and comics lore, then backs her observations with nuts and bolts publication statistics (with due credit given to sources Dan Stevenson, Ernie Gerber, et al) that sometimes reinforce and sometimes alter our perspective on comics history. As sure-fire as this recipe might seem, the result could still be exceedingly dry, if not concocted by a talented writer. But Michelle is definitely that. She has an engaging writing voice, flavoring her displays of knowledge with an enthusiasm that is infectious. (Though I had no conscious interest in reading anything about the romance genre, I enjoyed Nolan's piece on the "love glut" of the 1950s in CBM #28).

Of course, when these talents are focused on a topic dear to the reader's heart, the experience is especially gratifying. That's why my personal favorite among Michelle's columns in CBM #22-43 is "Infantino's Sherlock of Simians...Detective Chimp," about a terrific if somewhat obscure series by a great comic book storyteller.

And I loved it when she wrote, in an article about Sheldon Mayer's Scribbly, "Speaking as a collector of the Golden Age adventures of the greatest character of them all in my book–Green Lantern..." In mine too, Michelle! At one time in the 1960s, I amassed a sizeable collection (alas, long gone, all of it) of comics featuring Alan Scott, Doiby Dickles, Goitrude the cab, Streak and the rest–a lot of All Americans, a bunch of Green Lanterns and All Stars, and a few issues of Comic Cavalcade. How about one or more Notebook segments about this long-running feature: important developments within the storyline; creative talents behind the scenes; your experiences and perceptions as a reader and collector of the series?

One more suggestion while I'm at it, is a companion piece to your Big Eight 8 article, one that would examine the early years at DC, say 1935-40, the creation of the new-material anthology titles and the eventual takeover of them by the superheros, resulting in the Big 6 headliners that led directly into the creation of All Star and the Justice Society of America.

Or, whatever. Part of the fun in following Nolan's Notebook comes from not knowing where it will lead you next. Wherever… I'll be ready to go.

John R. Thomas, Idaho

Kudos To Michael Naiman

Once again, kudos to Michael Naiman for another outstanding article in the January, 1997, issue (#43), on the Disney Ducks!

I was relieved to see that my years of fruitless searching for Uncle $crooge #179 have not been entirely due to bad luck or incompetence, somehow. Apparently, like a lot of other collectors, that is the only issue I am missing to complete my run of the Uncle $crooge series! Normally, I enjoy the thrill of the hunt, and the excitement of finally making the discovery. However, in this case, anyone out there with a U$ #179 for sale is free to contact me! It was also nice to have a cover picture of this issue included in the article (on page 61). At least I know it actually exists.

Somewhat along the same lines as the scarcity of U$ #179 (i.e. a case of poor distribution of the Whitman series of the Disney comics, and things in 3-packs), there is a little bit of a secret to finding the "Treat Pedigree" limited edition collectors pack, containing the three issue Don Rosa reprint (item #19 in Naiman's article, pictured on page 62). Anyone looking in regular comics stores will be sorely disappointed. I have at least six of the packs, all of which have been variously found in Wal-Mart, K-Mart, or the Books-a-Million chains, the only places I've run across them so far. I haven't seen any for the last year or so, but I haven't really been looking anymore either.

Somewhat of a rhetorical question, I wonder if Walt Disney Comics and Stories #480 was in the same 3-pack as Uncle $crooge #179? They were both approximately the same publication date (August-September, 1980). A real question: exactly what is the "Donald Duck Whitman #978" referred to in one of the lists in the article? A comic, a book, or what?

Joseph A. Dixon, Kentucky

According to Michael Naiman, Donald Duck #222, Daisy & Donald #47, Walt Disney's Comics and Stories #480, and Uncle Scrooge #179 were all distributed during the Summer of 1980, so it is possible… but, regretably, unlikely. This is because Western published such an incredibly large assortment of titles at that time, that the chances they would have ended up in the same 3-Pack is pretty slim. Oh by the way… Uncle Scrooge #179 just sold at auction for a whopping 10.5 times Guide ($105)… for a modern reprint book! The Whitman #978 is the Donald Duck "linen book" (see Overstreet #26, page 169).

Mistaken For Wood

Great issue on Wally Wood. I especially liked Will Murray's detective work on Amazing Fantasy #16. What a super job. I'm convinced, and you know I'm not an easy sell.

I'll keep my quibbling to a minimum, but Link Yaco is wrong to dismiss Adkins' plagiarism as tribute. If he needs more proof, have him write me and I'll provide it. I'm not about to publicly air that laundry again.

I'm relying on memory here, but I think all of Wood's paperback work was for Galaxy Science Fiction Novels or Ace Crime titles. I can't recall any Ace sci-fi work. Can Link provide me with details?

Some of my favorite Wood material is the Fox romance stuff he did in 1948-50, often with Harrison. It's amazing to watch a genius develop. One fascinating aspect of that period is the presence of an artist named Martin Rose whose work is often mistaken for Wood, but the Wood from the early '50's. Is this unheralded influence?

Congrats to Lou Mougin for digging up all of those obscure '60's appearances, especially the TV shot in Horror of Party Beach. What a scream. Hey, let's not forget the bubble gum cards and stickers...

But on page 46, I think Al Williamson might have something (perhaps everything!) to say about that ClawFang strip in Thrill-o-Rama #2. Sorry, Lou, but it just ain't Wood.

But I can give as well as receive: check out the DC Romance books for more classic Wood inks in the '70s. And in the early '50s one should look carefully at issues of Planet, the pulp magazine… and he's even in one issue of Marvel Science Fiction too.

It's wonderful that Bob Barrett took the time to set the ERB record straight. I hope someday you can find the time *Continued on page 76*

Gambaccini *continued from CBM #45*

(Editor's note: Last issue we had a text flow problem during film output… so here is the final part of Paul Gambaccini's article continued from issue #45.)

The only way to do this, of course, was to split the gem with his own diamond-tipped arrow. I am amused now when I see a letter of mine Julie printed in ATOM #2. "In all honesty, I do not think The Atom should join the Justice League of America," I confided, as if my opinion mattered. "I don't think he has the magnitude worthy of joining the organization–especially considering his limited powers." Julie's printed response was, "We wonder how you'll size up the Atom's 'magnitude' after you read his initiation into the JLA (September issue)!" I later led off a MYSTERY IN SPACE letter column with a plan not to admit Adam Strange. "Don't do it! How would it look to have a JLA member run away in the middle of a case to hop onto a zeta-beam? How would it look if Adam was paged to a JLA meeting while he was stuck on Rann? Pretty embarrassing, eh? In fact, downright ridiculous!" What I had no way of knowing was that Schwartz had already commissioned a story teaming Strange with the JLA, the Alley Award winning "Planet That Came to a Standstill." (No one ever suggested an Adam Strange-Dr. Strange cross-company crossover.)

The League did have an honorary member beginning with the very first story, "Starro the Conqueror," which was inspired by a Ray Cummings science-fiction story Schwartz loved called "Tyranno the Conqueror." Snapper Carr had been working on the lawn like any conscientious suburban lad. Because he was coated in lime dust he was resistant to Starro's trance ray. (Please don't ask how. These books were science fiction, after all, and if you doubted Gardner Fox's premises you were never going to enjoy his conclusions.) For his help on the case, Snapper, so called because he snapped his fingers whenever he was happy, was made an honorary member. He really was made an honorary member to give young readers someone with whom to identify, but we didn't think of plot devices in crass terms like that. Snapper's dialogue is classic, anyway, both as period literature and unintentional comedy.

Speaking of adolescents, the Teen Titans were still twenty-six issues of BRAVE AND THE BOLD away, but their formation was first discussed in the JLA Mail Room in B & B #30. Reader Larry Maher suggested a "Junior Justice League of America," and Schwartz replied, "We hope to make an interesting announcement about this soon."

The 1962 Alley Awards, the second annual fan prizegiving, introduced the category of Best Editor. Jerry Bails's citations read, "The award couldn't go to a more deserving gentleman, one of fandom's favorites, Julius Schwartz, a DC editor since 1944, and the man most responsible for the strip development, story ideas, plotting, and final approval of scripts and art for the JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, FLASH, MYSTERY IN SPACE, GREEN LANTERN, THE ATOM and STRANGE ADVENTURES, as well as many issues of DC's two 'try-out' magazines, BRAVE and BOLD and SHOWCASE. All eight of these titles were among the Top Ten Comics selected by fandom in the 1962 poll. This is an accomplishment deserving of fandom's highest award, The Golden Alley."

The love affair was complete. There have been successful comic book editors since and there will be more, but there can only ever be one winner of the first Best Editor award. Julius Schwartz was it, is it, and will always be it.

Sadly, I haven't been in touch with Jerry Bails for over a quarter of a century. I do have an inkling of what happened to Roy Thomas, and I suspect that some of his stories will wind up in Archive Editions sooner or later. Don and Maggie Thompson I read every week in the Comic Buyer's Guide. JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA I think about every week as we strive to keep some issues in stock in our London comic book store. Yes, my partner Jonathan Ross and I couldn't resist opening a shop devoted to the popular art form that has meant so much to us. Nothing gives me more pleasure than to see someone enjoying today a book that was precious to me as a boy. In that spirit I invite you now to discover, or to reread these pioneer stories of the Silver Age.

With this overdue book the early JLA classics are available for all. Herein you can watch *Continued on page 77*

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to edit my L. B. Cole corrections into publishable format.

Keep on publishing. Peace.

Jim Vadeboncoeur, Jr., California

Lou knew the ClawFang strip in Thrill-o-Rama #2 was written by Wood and drawn by Williamson… I just did a lousy job of making that clear in the caption. You and about 11,000 other CBM readers reminded me of the lack of clarity in that @#$%^&^%$#@ caption! Imagine my embarrassment when I next speak with Al Williamson… whew… is my face red.

Alberta Comic Collectors Assoc.

Comic Book Marketplace continues to be the most beautiful publication on the stands. I keep promoting it to other members in the Alberta Comic Collectors Association, not only to those who are collectors of Golden Age and Silver Age material but also to those members who are on the periphery of collecting. I figure once they see all those gorgeous full-color reproductions, they'll be hooked and realize that thirty year old+ comics offer something that today's do not.

Even an old hat like me can pick up information from CBM. For instance, in the interview with Paul S. Newman, I learned that he wrote the Dell Four-Color "Steve Canyon" titles! That's good to know since I was writing an in-depth piece on the series for "Canffites Journal".

Keep up the excellent work, Gary!

Carl J. Horak, Alberta, Canada

Sultan of Scripts

WOW! What a fascinating story about the Sultan of Scripts! Paul Newman wrote not only an almost incredible number of stories, but look at all those titles! Thanks for ending his pretty anonymous career. Maybe you should look into doing the same for that editor I never heard of–Matt Murphy–who created Turok and Dr. Solar, two of my favorites before Valiant/Acclaim changed them.

Dean E. Wernick, Pennsylvania

Spirit of the hobby

Your magazine is consistently fascinating, educating, and just plain fun! It captures the spirit of the hobby. Keep up the great work.

Michael Agnelli, New Hampshire

Wally Wood Video?

Issue #44 of CBM paid tribute to one of comic's creative giants, Wally Wood. The beautiful cover portrait (originally from Weird Science #16) was the inspiration for Topps famous Mars Attacks trading card series. To call Wood the "greatest science fiction artist" has become a cliche, but it's a cliche rooted in truth. He was a masterful and meticulous stylist and a powerful influence on many other artists. Like Jack Kirby, Wood was a dedicated perfectionist who spent endless hours at the drawing board.

In an intelligent and literate essay, Link Yaco explores Wood's lesser known efforts. Some may find Yaco's views provocative and "overly academic," but I really enjoyed his article. I also enjoyed the Wood related material by J. David Spurlock, Lou Mougin and Shawn Hamilton, and have ordered the debut issue of Mr. Spurlock's "Complete Wallace Wood Collection".

Noted collector Roger Hill penned an entertaining retrospective of his early years as a Wood aficionado. Hill actually attended the historic EC Fan Addict Convention of 1972. According to a Bhob Stewart magazine article, someone shot several hours of documentary video of Wally Wood circa 1972, including his appearance at the EC Fan Addict Convention in New York. I am curious to know if any of the footage survives, and if it might be marketed. A videocassette featuring Wood at work and at the '72 EC Convention would certainly be an invaluable and fascinating project.

Wood endured much agony and suffering during his final years, and ultimately chose to exit this mortal coil. If he had lived, he would have reached seventy years old this year. Although he died at age fifty-four, his legacy lives on as long as fans continue to appreciate, discuss and collect the wonderful artwork of Wallace Wood.

Timothy M. Walters, Oklahoma

So Long Dan Barry

Dan Barry was born July 11, 1923 in Long Branch, New Jersey.

He died Saturday January 25, 1997 in Cleveland, GA. following an extended illness. His outstanding work on Flash Gordon helped establish him as one of the most talented illustrators in comic strips.

He reached younger audiences with work in comics on such titles as "Young Indiana Jones". His presence influenced fans and artists alike and he was one of the earliest instructors at what

is now called The School Of Visual Arts in New York (formerly the School for Cartoonists and Illustrators).

In addition to his extraordinary artistic prowess, he was also an excellent writer. He worked on such titles as "Daredevil" and Crime Does Not Pay" with Bob Wood. For this series, he wrote several stories including "Gyp the Blood" and "Monkey Mauritta" with Charles Biro.

Ed Rhoades, Pennsylvania

Addicted all over again

Just picked up CBM #43 at a local comic shop–it's been a long time since I have been in a comic shop. I've just started to read some of the newer graphic novels, and I must say I am quite impressed. My fear is that I may become addicted all over again. I was looking through the magazine section and saw your publication, and, well, I must say I fell in love. Please take my money. Send post haste my new issues of CBM. Ya know, I need to get out more often.

Scott Anderson, Wisconsin

Panepictographist Committed!

The Wally Wood tribute issue was long overdue and may be your best effort yet! Wally's heroes always struck poses that exuded controlled power and you just knew the bad guys were going to receive the pasting of their lives! The article on Wood by Link Yaco had a psychoanalyzing tone I didn't care for. Wood's women heifers? When it comes to the Iron Maiden I'd trade places with that lunkhead Dynamo in a heartbeat! My favorite article was the one by Roger Hill. Reading it brought me back to over 30 years ago when my brother and I never got along but one thing we shared in common was our admiration for Wally Wood. His version of Daredevil will always be my favorite and this long-time comics fan still misses him.

I've always enjoyed the writing finesse of Will Murray and his article on Spider-Man is no exception. I can't believe the amount of detetive work that went into his article! I am not sure I can come to the same conclusions as he has but until more concrete information via the participants come forth, his theories are logical and plausible. How about getting him to write an article on the Shadow of the comics?

So, Gary, I'm a panepictographist, eh? I think I'll use the term just to see the look on people's faces and count how many act like they know what it is and how many have the guts to ask what it is. Maybe if I keep repeating it like a mantra, I'll be able to memorize it or be carted off to the nearest asylum (I sure hope it won't be Arklawn!).

Oh, excuse me...gotta go, there's two nice young men in white coats at my door asking my wife if The Panepictographist lives here!

Eric G. Blackmore, Tennessee

Wood's Mystery Woman?

I greatly enjoyed Comic Book Marketplace #44–almost all of it about my artist hero Wallace Wood! Perhaps you could answer a question of mine. My favorite Wood creations will always be those in MAD. I can usually recognize the various cameos he puts into his cartoons–for example, William Gaines often pops up in odd corners, here and there.

From 1957 to 1958, however, a woman character appears repeatedly–tall, thin, thin face, black hair in a bun. In #38, she appears as Belinda in "Nobody has any fun at parties"–wearing a t-shirt with a big "W" on it. In #39 she is a dancer in "How to make America's kids science conscious", among other places. No, it's not Morticia Addams, whom Wood also drew.

Might you have any idea who this mystery

Gambaccini *continued from 75*

DC's best fight it out with Starro, Amazo, Despero, and even some villains whose names don't end in "o."

You can read a story-telling structure unique to comics and form your own opinion of one of comicdom's most recognizable art styles. Like hundreds of thousands of isolated readers in 1959 through 1961, you can be "of," regardless of where you are "from," the Justice League of America. I promise to stock this book in our store. And I promise to give a copy to Salman Rushdie.

—**PAUL GAMBACCINI**

Paul Gambaccini is an American who has spent the past two decades broadcasting for BBC radio and television. A member of comics' first fandom, Paul co-owns a London comic book shop with British television personality Jonathan Ross.

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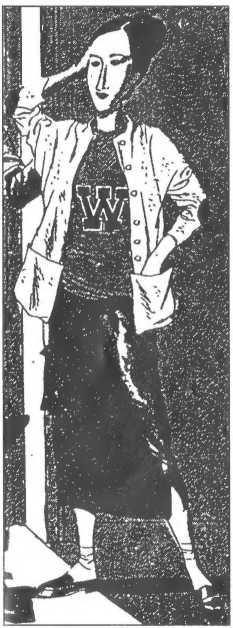
COMING NEXT MONTH IN CBM

An Interview with Russ Heath By Steven Fears
DC War By Mick Rabin
Haunted Tank! By Stephen Gentner

cameo is? My theory is she was Wood's wife (named Tatjana, according to Marketplace #44). Even if you cannot answer this supremely obscure question, thank you anyway.

John Lockwood, Washington D.C.



Peter Pan's Treasure Chest

Thank you for sending me the back issues last month. I really enjoy your publication. I like your article about the 25c square-back Annuals or Giants. I wish you could do more detailed information about the Dell Giants. I have always enjoyed collecting them. In one issue, there was an article that stated that there is no known issue of the Giant Peter Pan Treasure Chest in mint condition. This is wrong because I have a file-mint copy of Peter Pan's Treasure Chest.

Brian D. Gardner, Indiana

Am I the only one?

Am I the only one who has ever noticed a definite Will Elder influence on the work of Russ Heath? Elder, of course, did extensive work for EC's horror, science-fiction and war comics in the early '50's, including inking much of John Severin's pencils for the latter. I also sometimes see an echo of that Severin/Elder style in many of Heath's compositions, especially; his DC war work. I would also point out that:

(1) Heath's work in Strange Adventures #114 [described in the Overstreet Guide–mistakenly, in my opinion–as "Wood style"] and more markedly, in issue #116, both exhibit resemblance to Elder's work in Weird Science and Weird Fantasy–almost to the point of homage.

(2) Heath did artwork for Atlas such as the lead story in Journey Into Mystery #5 that was strongly reminiscent of Elder's horror work. The wonderfully lurid story itself, about a sadistic asylum director who becomes the target of his victim's vengeance, was right out of EC, which is not so unusual for the horror mags of the time. I remember, when I first read it many years ago, momentarily thinking it actually was Elder–or at least an imitator–until I caught Heath's bold signature on the splash page. Heath's work for the Atlas humor mags like Crazy was also quite Elderian in nature.

(3) There seems to be a direct lineage between both artists' use of very strong, crisp line and heavy solid black shadowing, particularly on faces. Russ Heath, of course, was a far better draughtsman and much more realistic, while Elder tended to the more cartoony, even when he was drawing "serious." But my contention is simply that Heath, like all intelligent artists, took just what he could use from his influences, and there seem to be a number of stylistic elements that he could have gleaned from the work of Will Elder, who was a superb graphic master. (Any and all comments are welcome, including that I'm all wet on this one!) Best wishes.

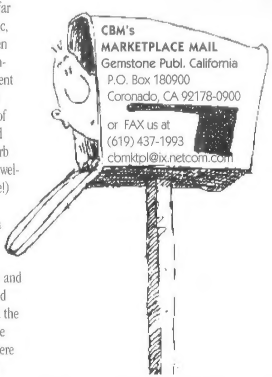
Tony Gleeson, California

Harvey Horror Reprints?

I am a reader of Comic Book Marketplace and I would like to say hello! I just purchased the November '96 issue of CBM and I liked the Horror Comics article in CBM as well as the Felix article. The article had mentioned there was going to be a Harvey Reprint Series of Felix stories, but never happened. I would love to see Harvey Reprints of Chamber of Chills and Black Cat Mystery. Perhaps they could be reprinted as "The Harvey Story" (vol. 1, vol. 2, etc....) The Horror Years. If legal reasons could be settled, I'd purchase this book on the spot. I hope that it will see the light of day. I truly hope that the Harvey family will consider this wonderful idea, and while I'm on the subject, how about a Harvey Story (the childrens' classics). The books could reprint Casper, Wendy, Richie Rich, Baby Huey, Hot Stuff, in separate volumes (vol. #1, vol. #2, etc.). I always liked Harvey and I always felt that many of its characters were always never truly recognized as great comic book characters. In closing, I'd like to see articles on Richie Rich, Spooky, Wendy, Sad Sack etc. These characters truly deserve true recognition.

Gene Evans, Kansas

My thanks to everyone who wrote in this time, I look forward to hearing comments and suggestions from CBM readers all over the world. You're all part of the "CBM family" now, and your opinion counts! I hope you'll write or FAX soon! Please note that CBM reserves the right to edit letters selected for publication for length and/or content. If you'd care to write, send communications to:



Comic-Quizz ??

TAKE THE CBM COMIC KNOWLEDGE CHALLENGE!

Welcome to **CBM**'s Comic Quizz, a column devoted to tidbits and trivia from all ages of comic book history. Each month we will present interesting facts, figures and comic folklore that will challenge your knowledge and tickle your memory banks! Subjects will include stuff you know... stuff you don't know... and stuff that will surprise you!

by Rob Satonica

Q: It would almost be fair to say that more has been written about Will Eisner than was written by him, but that is just a small part to his contribution to the visual storytelling form. He started the Eisner-Iger shop with Jerry Iger, and is best known for the Spirit. He got his start in comics at age 19. Which comic contained his first work?

A: Wow Comics #1, 1936.

Q: With all of the fan publications out there today, there is ample coverage of comic creators, artists, writers—just about anyone doing anything in comics. In the early days of comics, those who spun the wonderful tales that would fire the imagination of millions of readers were largely unknown. The first comic to feature creators did so with a simple one-page biography, including photos. Which comic was it?

A: Superman #1, in a one-page bio (with photo) of Siegel and Shuster.

Q: After the code had taken hold, EC Comics began publishing more censor-friendly fare.

One of these books was originally printed by Charlton Press, but when Gaines saw how poorly they had been printed, he ordered the entire print run destroyed and had them done over. Only one copy from the original printing was kept by Gaines, and was discovered when his personal file copies became available. Which issue was it?

A: Impact #1.

Q: John Stanley spent many years working on *Marge's Little Lulu* and would become the artist most associated with the strip. Little Lulu was created by and based on someone else. Who was it?

A: Marjorie Henderson Buell.

Q: Barks shared the art chores for *Four Color Comics* #9 with another Disney legend.

Who was the other artist that worked with "the old Duck Man" on Bob Karp's "Donald Duck Finds Pirate Gold"?

A: Jack Hannah.

Q: In the early 1940s, this legendary artist wrote and drew two strips under the pseudonym Michael Griffith. They were Cosmic Carson in *Science Comics* and The Solar Legion in *Crash*. He would continue to work in comics for over 50 years until his death at age 75. Who was he?

A: Jack Kirby.

Q: Hawkman has been drawn by numerous artists over the Winged Wonder's 50 plus year history. Sheldon Moldoff is most associated with the character in his earliest adventures. Which artist actually originated the Golden Age Hawkman strip in *Flash Comics*?

A: Dennis Neville.

Q: Mort Meskin started at DC on the Vigilante strip in *Action Comics*. His style was refreshingly unlike his contemporaries of the time, such as Shuster or Kane. His rendering of Johnny Quick was especially unique at the time, drawing the character in motion as a series of fully rendered figures, rather than blurry speed lines or outlines. He was often inked by his close friends and would sign his work to reflect this. He would sign the work "by Mort Meskin, Jr. and..." followed by the first name of the inker: Joe, Cliff, Charley, or George. Who were Mort's mystery inkers?

A: Joe Kubert, Cliff Young, Charley Paris, and George Roussos.

Q: The pseudonym "Grotsky" is an amalgam of two artists names. Together, they would illustrate many strips in the 1940s including *The Three Aces* and *Cliff Crosby*. They were also good friends with many of the early EC artists of that decade and did a few stories for the company. Who were the two artists?

A: Alex Kotzky and Chad Grothkopf.

Q: While little is known about Howard Nostrand, his work in comics stands as a testament to his talent, especially his horror work at Harvey in the '50s. He would work sporadically until his death in 1975. What was the last series he worked on?

A: John Target by Atlas/Seaboard.